Now or *Never.*

The *Holy*, *Serious*, *Diligent* Believer Justified, Encouraged, Excited and Directed. And the *Opposers* and *Neglecters* convinced by the light of Scripture and Reason.

By *Richard Baxter.*

To be Communicated, by such as want ability or opportunity themselves to plead the Cause of *Serious Holiness*, for mens Conviction.

Luke 7. 35. *But wisdom is justified of all her children.*

Nihil est ad defendendum Puritate *tutius: nihil ad dicendum* Veritate *facilius.* Ambros.

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

THE PREFACE.

IT is a queſtion more boldly than accurately debated by many, [*Whether a man may not be ſaved in any Religion, that is faithful to the principles of it by ſerious diligent practice.*] The true Solution is this: *Religion* is that which men hold and do to ſerve and pleaſe God. 1. If men make themſelves a Religion of ſerving Idols or Devils inſtead of God. 2. Or if they place their ſervice to God himſelf in things that are evil (as what evil is there that ſome men have not brought into their Religion, and fathered upon God?) the more *diligent* ſuch men are in their Reli-

gion, the more they ſin. 3. Or if they make themſelves a Religion of irrational ludicrous ceremonies, their greateſt diligence in this will not ſave them. 4. Or if they hold all the Eſſentials of the True Religion, except ſome one, it cannot ſave them while *one* thing is wanting which is *Eſſential* to that Religion, and ſo neceſſary to ſalvation (which is the caſe of real Hereticks:) For they are not indeed of *that Religion*, if they want that which is Eſſential to it. 5. Or if they hold all that is *Eſſential* to the *true Religion* only *Notionaly*, and hold any thing with it *practicaly*, which is contradictory and inconſiſtent with it, the ſoundneſs of the *Notional belief* will not ſave them from the mortal poiſon of their *Practical* Hereſie or Error.

But 1. Whoſoever holdeth all that is neceſſary to ſalvation, and is *ſerious* and *diligent* in living according thereunto, ſhall be ſaved, whatever errour he holdeth with it. For if he be *ſerious* and

and *diligent* in the Practice of all things *Neceſſary* to ſalvation, he *hath* all that *is neceſſary* to ſalvation, *viz.* in *Belief* and *Practice:* And it muſt needs follow, that his *Errours* are either not contradictory to the things Neceſſary which he holdeth and practiſeth, or that he holdeth not thoſe *Errours Practically*, but *Notionally*, as an Opinion, or uneffectual Cogitation in a dream, which provoketh not to action; And in ſuch a caſe the errour keepeth no man from ſalvation.

What is neceſſary to be believed by them that never hear the Goſpel, it ſo little concerneth us to know, that God hath not thought meet to make it ſo plain to us, as things that more concern our ſelves. But as it is certain, that without the Attonement, Satisfaction, and Reconciliation made by Chriſt, and without new terms of Grace to be judged by, and without his Grace for the performance of their part, no man can be ſaved (that hath

the uſe of reaſon,) ſo there is ſo much knowledge neceſſary to ſalvation, as is neceſſary, [to engage the heart to love God above all, and ſincerely to obey his revealed will, and to prefer the life to come before the tranſitory pleaſures of this life.] Now if any man can prove to me, that thoſe that never heard the Goſpel, can thus love God, and the life to come, and obey ſincerely, without the knowledge of the perſon, life, death, reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, and the Declaration of the attractive Love and Goodneſs of God in him, and in the work of our Redemption, then I ſhould believe that ſuch Negative Infidels may be ſaved: For God cannot damn a ſanctified ſoul, that ſincerely loveth him. But if the diſcovery of the Love of God in our Redemption be ſo neceſſary a moral means to engage the heart (now corrupted by ſin and creature-love) to the true Love of God, that this love cannot be wrought without it; or

if

if Christ give not his *Spirit* to produce the Love of God in any but those that hear the Gospel, and believe in him, then no such persons can be saved by their Religion. For Christ is the way to the Father, and no man cometh to the Father but by him; and the Love of God is absolutely and of its self necessary to salvation; and Faith in Christ is so far necessary to salvation, as it is necessary to bring men to the Love of God, as pardoning sin and reconciled to them.

But if any should never so confidently conclude, that some that hear not of Christ may be saved, yet he must needs confess that the want of this clear and great discovery of the Love and goodness of God, in his pardoning grace, and of the glorious life which he hath prepared for us, must needs make the Love of God a very rare and difficult thing, and consequently their salvation rare and difficult, in comparison of ours.

The Christian Faith, is [*The believing an*

an everlaſting life of happineſs to be given by God (with the pardon of all ſin) as procured by the ſufferings and merits of Jeſus Chriſt, to all that are ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, and do perſevere in love to God, and to each other, and in a holy and heavenly converſation.] This is ſaving Faith and Chriſtianity, if we *Conſent* as well as *Aſſent*. All that was *neceſſary* to *ſalvation* to be believed, was formerly thought to be contained in the *Creed*, and that was the teſt or ſymbol of the Chriſtian Faith; and Chriſtian Religion is the ſame, and hath the ſame rule, and teſt, and ſymbol in all ages. But ſince Faction and Tyranny, Pride and Covetouſneſs became the maſters of the Religion of too many, *vice*, and *ſelfiſh-intereſt* hath commanded them to change the Rule of Faith by their additions, and to make ſo much *neceſſary* to *ſalvation*, as is *neceſſary* to their affected Univerſal Dominion, and to their Commodity and carnal ends. And ſince Faction entered, and hath torn the Church

Church into many Sects (the Greek, the Roman, the Armenian, the Jacobites, the Abaſſine, and many more) it ſeemeth meet to the more tyrannical Sect to call theſe *ſeveral Religions*, and to ſay that every man that differeth from them in any of their opinions or additions, which they pleaſe to call Articles of Faith, is of another Religion.

* And if the word *Religion* be taken in

* *And yet when they have divided the Church, and damned the greateſt part of Chriſtians, and raged with fire and ſword againſt their brethren, they confeſs themſelves that it is no point of faith at all, that it is of* Divine right *that the Biſhop of* Rome *is* St. Peters *Succeſſor, and not only of humane right. And muſt the Church be divided, and moſt be damned for not believing or ſubmitting to a* humane Ordinance? *If we be of* many *Religions, is not Popery then a* humane Religion? *The very words of* Smith *Biſhop of* Chalcedon, *the chiefeſt of the Engliſh Popiſh Clergy, are theſe.* Survey c. 5. "To "us it ſufficeth that the Biſhop of Rome *is* "St. Peters *Succeſſor, and this all the Fathers* "teſtifie, *and all the Catholick Church believe-* "eth; but whether it be jure divino, or "humano, *is no point of faith.*] *And how do their Laicks here know what is a point of faith, but by the teſtimony of their Prieſts?*

this

this ſenſe, and if all that agree in *One Chriſtian Religion*, are ſaid to be of as many *Religions*, as different opinions, in points that ſome call *neceſſary*, then I anſwer the Queſtion thus. He is the true Catholick Chriſtian that hath but *One*, even the *Chriſtian Religion*: And this is the caſe of the *Proteſtants*, who caſting off the additions of Popery, adhere to the Primitive ſimplicity and unity: If Papiſts, or any others, corrupt this Religion with humane additions and innovations, the great danger of theſe Corruptions, is, leſt they draw them from the ſound belief and *ſerious Practice* of that ancient Chriſtianity, which we are all agreed in: And (among Papiſts, or any other Sect) where their corruptions do not thus corrupt their *Faith* and *Practice* in the true *Eſſentials*, it is certain that thoſe corruptions ſhall not damn them. For he that truly believeth all things

that

that are essential to Christianity, and liveth accordingly with *serious diligence*, hath the promise of salvation: And it is certain, that what errour that man holdeth, it is either not inconsistent with true Christianity, or not *practicaly*, but *notionaly* held, and so not inconsistent as held by him: For how can that be *inconsistent* which *actualy doth consist with it?*

If a Papist or any other Sectary do seriously Love God, and his Brother; and set his heart upon the Life to come, and give up himself to the merits and grace of Jesus Christ, and the sanctification of the holy Spirit, to be fitted for that Glory, and liveth by faith above the world, and mortifieth the desires of the flesh, and liveth wilfully in no known sin, but presseth after further degrees of holiness, I doubt not of the salvation of that person: No more than of the life of him that

that hath taken poiſon but into his mouth and ſpit it out again, or let down ſo little as nature and antidotes do expel: But I will not therefore *plead for poiſon*, nor *take it*, becauſe men *may live* that thus take it.

Having anſwered this great Queſtion, Reader, I am now come up to the ſubject of my following diſcourſe, and to tell thee that though it be a great queſtion whether *ſerious diligence* in a corrupt Religion will ſave a man, it is paſt all queſtion, and agreed on by all ſides, that no Religion will ſave a man, that is not *ſerious*, *ſincere*, and *diligent* in it. If thou be of the *trueſt Religion* in the world, and art not true thy ſelf to that *Religion*, the *Religion* is good, but it is none of *thine*. *Objectively* thou art of a true and good Religion, the things in themſelves are *true* and good; but *ſubjectively* thou art ſincerely of *no Religion* at all; for

for if thou art not *ſerious*, *hearty* and *diligent* in it, it is certain that thou doſt not *truly* entertain it, and make it thine; but it is thy *Books* that have the true *Religion*, or thy *tongue*, or *fantaſie*, or *brain*, but not thy *heart*: And the beſt meat on *thy table*, or that goeth no further than thy *mouth*, will never feed thee, or preſerve thy life. So certain is the ſalvation of every holy mortified Chriſtian, and ſo certain the damnation of every *ungodly*, worldly, fleſhly ſenſualiſt, that I had a thouſand-fold rather have my ſoul in the caſe of a godly *Anabaptiſt*, yea or a Monk, or Fryar among the Papiſts that liveth a truly heavenly life, in the love of God and man, and in a *ſerious diligent* obedience to God according to his knowledge, than in the caſe of a Proteſtant, or whomſoever you can imagine to be righteſt in his opinions, that is *worldly*, and *ſenſual*, and a ſtranger (if not an enemy) to the

the *power* and *ſerious practice* of his own profeſt *Religion*, and void of a Holy and Heavenly heart and life. If ever *ſuch* a man be ſaved, the principles of *all* Religion do deceive us.

And certainly ſuch mens *hypocriſie* doth aggravate their ſin, and will increaſe their miſery. So many as there be in the world, that profeſs themſelves *Chriſtians*, and yet are not *ſerious* and *diligent* in their Religion, but are ungodly neglecters or enemies of a holy life, ſo many *Hypocrites* are in the world. And I wonder that their *conſciences* call them not *Hyporrites*, when they ſtand up at the Creed, or profeſs themſelv.s Believers: Though the Congregation ſeeth not [*hypocrite*] written in their *foreheads*, *God* ſeeth it written on their *hearts*, and thoſe that converſe with them may ſee it written in their *lives*. And yet theſe men are the forwardeſt to cry out againſt

againſt *Hypocrites*: The Devil hath taught it them to ſtop the *ſuſpition* and the *chaſe* of conſcience, as he hath taught the *greateſt Schiſmaticks* or Church-dividers (the Papiſts) to cry out moſt againſt *Schiſm* and diviſion, and pretend to *unity*. But theſe ſhifts do blind none but fools, and forſaken conſciences; and the cheat that is now detected by the wiſe, will quickly by God be detected before all the world. Till then let them make merry in their deceits: who would envy the drunkard the pleaſure of an hours ſwiniſh ſick delight? This is *their portion*, and this is *their time*: As we have choſen and covenanted for *another portion*, we are content to ſtay the *time* aſſigned, till God ſhall tell them and all the world, who was *ſincere*, and who the *hypocrite*. For our parts, we believe that he is *moſt* or *leaſt ſincere*, that is *moſt* or *leaſt ſerious* in the *practice* of his own profeſt Religion.

For

For my part, I muſt profeſs that (by the mercy of God) I have made it the work of many a year, to look about me, and think wherein the felicity of man doth indeed conſiſt: And I have long been paſt doubt (as much as I am that I am a man) that it is not in tranſitory ſenſual delights; and that theſe are ſuch lean and dry commodities, and pittiful pleaſures, leaving men ſo ſpeedily in a forlorn ſtate, that I am contented that my greateſt enemy have my part of them. I have renounced them to God (as any part of my felicity) and I renounce them to men: Let them do with me about theſe things as God will give them leave. I will have a portion after death, or Ile have none.

And the caſe is ſo palpable, that it is my admiration that the contrary deceit is conſiſtent with the nature and reaſon of a man; and that ſo many Gentlemen, and Scholars,

lars, and perſons of an ingenuous education, can no better diſtinguiſh, and can poſſibly conquer their reaſon ſo eaſily with the preſence of ſenſual delights, and ſo eaſily make nothing of that which *will be to morrow* and *for ever*, meerly becauſe *it is not to day*. Well! I muſt ſay, the Wiſdom and Juſtice of God is abundantly ſeen in the Government of the world with the Liberty of the will, and determining that *all men ſhould ſpeed as they chuſe*.

It may be the Reader will ſay, he expected that inſtead of writing ſuch popular diſcourſes, I ſhould have *vindicated my ſelf* againſt the accuſations, that in multitudes of Libels and Pamphlets are ſcattered abroad againſt me. But doth he think that man is *ſeriouſly a Chriſtian* that is not more zealous for *God* and *Religion*, and the *ſouls of men*, than for *himſelf?* Have I nothing

elſe

elſe to do with my *time* and *labour*, but plead a cauſe of *my own*, which *God* will ſo *ſpeedily* and *effectually* plead? Will it not be *time enough* to be juſtified at the Bar and day of God? I am content that they carry it as they deſire till then (were it not more for their own and other men ſakes than mine.) I am like to *forſake* my *life and all* for Chriſt, and endure torments if I were called to it, if I cannot endure to be reviled and ſlandered by paſſionate men? Was it nothing that our *Lord* would *not anſwer for himſelf*, when he was accuſed before *Pilate?* Shall *they* be able to *calumniate* under the threatnings of the revenge of Heaven? and ſhall I not be able to be *ſilent* under ſuch a promiſe, as *Matth.* 5. 10, 11, 12. *The ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive!* Our Lord gave us an *example* of *not reviling* again, when he *was reviled: He made himſelf of*

no

no reputation, but endured the Croſs and contradiction of ſinners, deſpiſing the ſhame. I confeſs I think when Gods *intereſt*, and the *good of others* doth require it, a man ſhould not be wanting to his *own defence*, and I have long ago *written* that which will ſatisfie the impartial: But when I ſaw that it is like to tend to *heats*, and ſet *more on work*, I had rather let men call me all the names they can deviſe; and voluminouſly accuſe me of any thing that malice ſhall ſuggeſt, than do any thing to *foment contentions* in the Church. But if God convince me that it is *my duty* to detect the *calumnies* of men, it is a work ſoon done.

But what good will it do the world for me to open the *numerous untruths* that other men have publiſhed, or to confute every Script; when all that I converſe with are *ſatisfied already*, and believe not the reproachers;

proachers; and all the evidence in the world will not ſatisfie thoſe that *will not read it*, or are reſolved by their *malice* or *intereſt* never to be ſatisfied?

For my part, I doubt not but God and their Conſciences will give them ſuch a Confutation as ſhall be ſufficient to them and me to end the Controverſie.

My work is to plead the Cauſe of God and Holineſs againſt the profane and ſenſual world, and no further to plead any Cauſe of my own, than is neceſſary to that. If I *muſt* bear the effects of mens diſpleaſure, I had an hundred times rather it were for pleading for *Holineſs*, and *Love*, and *Peace*, and *Concord*, againſt impiety, uncharitableneſs, and diviſions, than for *defending my ſelf*, or upon the account of *Ceremonies* or *ſmaller matters*. And if for *theſe* I bear it, I doubt not of more comfort at the

the preſent, much leſs do I doubt of a better *iſſue* than falſe accuſers can expect. We ſhall be ſhortly upon even ground: The time is ſhort: The pleaſures of ſin, the triumphs of malice, the ſufferings of innocency are but for a moment. I envy them not ſo ſhort and dark a day: The Judge is at the door that will judge all again, and ſet all ſtrait, and judge in righteouſneſs. When I am afraid of leaving a noiſom and unrighteous world, and ending all my pain and trouble, and being beyond the reach of malice, then I will fear what man can do. Let them keep me out of Heaven, or deprive me of my peace and comfort if they can: If *they* fear not the *threatnings of God* againſt the malicious and unjuſt; ſurely I have leſs reaſon to *fear their threatnings*. When they have done their *worſt to others*, let them *ſave themſelves* from death if they can: I am

devoted

devoted to God, and I never yet found cauſe to repent it: I am reſolved to uſe the *utmoſt of my power* for the intereſt of *Holineſs*, *Charity* and *Peace*, and for *Loyalty to the King*, and *obedience* or *patient ſubmiſſion* to ſuperiours: And if yet I bear the fruits of fury, let thoſe that inſult over ſufferers, as if they were therefore guilty or miſerable, remember that we *could* have avoided it if we *would*, and could have found the way of applauſe and proſperity as well as they; and that no man *takes* that for his *miſery* which he *chuſeth!* If this *kind* of *preaching* or *writing* offend, could not I have *avoided* it? I am not in *love* with ſufferings from men, nor will I eſcape them at the rates of Gods diſpleaſure. I never think my ſelf in the *higheſt form* of Chriſtians, till I am more *conform* to the *ſufferings of Chriſt*, and have endured more than yet I have.

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It is the Chriſtians old Apology in *Tertullian* : [*Quaſi non totum quod in nos poteſtis noſtrum ſit Arbitrium! Certè ſi velim Chriſtianus ſum; tunc ergo me damnabis, ſi damnari velim: Quum vero quod in me potes, niſi velim non potes, jam meæ voluntatis eſt quod potes, non tuæ poteſtatis: Proinde & vulgus vane de noſtra vexatione gaudet. Proinde & noſtrum eſt gaudium quod ſibi vendicant, qui malumus damnari quam à Deo excidere. Contra, illi qui nos oderunt, dolere non gaudere debebant, conſecutis nobis quod eligimus.*] *Tert. Apologet. cap.* 39.

That is, "As if all that you can do "againſt us were not our own "choice! (or will) Certainly it is "becauſe *I will* that I am a Chri- "ſtian; therefore if *I will* be con- "demned, then thou wilt condemn "me. And when that which thou "canſt do againſt me, thou canſt "not do, unleſs *I will*; it is not

" now from thy *power* that thou canſt " do it, but from *my will* : And " therefore the vulgar do in vain " *rejoyce* at our vexation. And there- " fore it is *our joy*, which they chal- " lenge to themſelves, while we had " *rather* be condemned than fall from " God. On the contrary, they that " hate us, ſhould grieve and not re- " joyce, while we attain but what " we *chuſe*.]

For my part, if the world will needs be mad, I think both the *laughing* and the *weeping* Philoſopher are more excuſable than he that would be *over-angry* at them, or *over-buſie* in diſputing with them; ſaith *Seneca* [*Quare ſeris ægri rabiem & phreneticiverba? nempe quia videntur neſcire quid faciunt. Quid intereſt quo quiſque vitio fiat imprudens? Sen. de Ira. l. 3. c. 26.* *Anger* and *Phrenſie* are but ſeveral waits of a mans loſing his wit; and therefore he that can bear with *one*, ſhould

ſhould ſomewhat bear with the other: (Though indeed *voluntarineſs*, or involuntarineſs maketh a great difference.) It is not worth a mans time, and labour, and coſt, to be over-ſolicitous in his own vindication, let the world ſay of him what they pleaſe. [*Multum temporis ultio abſumit: Multis ſe injuriis objicit, dum unam dolet. Diutius iraſcimur omnes quam lædimur.*] *Sen. de Ira. l.* 3. *c.* 27. "Revenge takes up a deal "of time: He that complaineth of "one injury, objects himſelf to "many. We are all angry longer "than we are hurt.

I have truly given you now the Reaſons, why I rather chuſe to ſpeak theſe common neceſſary things, againſt the Devils party, the ungodly, the enemies, or neglecters of *ſerious Holineſs*, (agreeable to the ſubject of his Majeſties Chriſtian and excellent Declaration againſt Debauchery at his entrance upon his Royal

Government) than to meddle with any of the contending parties of these times (who are so angry because in obedience to Authority I once endeavoured to reconcile them) or to be unseasonable in pleading any cause that is my own. And now referring the Reader to this short Discourse, I must first desire that he misunderstand me not in one or two passages. 1. That my citation of *the passage in the Homilies*, be not taken as if I spoke a word against it, though I say, I dare not my self subscribe it: For though I think my self, that seeing a *persecutor like Saul* may *repent*, and be *pardoned*; a *mocker at Godliness* may Repent and be *forgiven also*: Yet I am resolved still to suspect my own understanding, rather than to *speak against the doctrine of the Church*.

2. Think it not strange that I reprehend even Ministers that are secret, or open opposers of a holy diligence: For our foresaid Homily telleth

telleth us, as followeth: Hom. for Information, &c. part 2. p. 150, 151. [Examples of such scorners, we read in 2 *Chron.* "When the good King "*Hezekiah*, in the beginning of his "Reign had destroyed Idolatry, "purged the Temple, and Reform-"ed Religion in his Realm, he sent "Messengers into every City to ga-"ther the people to *Jerusalem* to "solemnize the Feast of *Easter* in "such sort as God had appointed. "The Posts went from City to "City ——And what did the people "think ye? Did they laud and "praise the name of the Lord that "had given them so good a King, "so zealous a Prince to abolish "Idolatry, and to restore again "Gods true Religion? No, no; "the Scripture saith, the people "laughed them to scorn, and "mocked the Kings Messengers. "And in the last Chapter of the "same Book it is written, that Al-

 "mighty

" mighty God having compaſſion
" on his people, ſent his Meſſen-
" gers the Prophets to them, to
" call them from their abominable
" Idolatry, and wicked kind of live-
" ing: But they mocked his Meſ-
" ſengers, they deſpiſed his words,
" and miſuſed his Prophets, until
" the wrath of the Lord aroſe
" againſt his people, and till there
" was no remedy.] — The wick-
" ed people that were in the days
" of *Noah* made but a mock at the
" word of God, when *Noah* told
" them that God would take ven-
" geance on them for their ſins—
" *Lot* preached to the *Sodomites*, that
" except they repented, both they
" and their City ſhould be deſtroyed;
" They thought his ſayings impoſ-
" ſible to be true; they ſcorned and
" mocked his admonitions, and re-
" puted him as an old doting fool:
" But God —— burnt up thoſe
" ſcorners and mockers of his holy
" Word,

" Word. And what eſtimation had " Chriſts Doctrine among the Scribes " and Phariſees? What reward had " he among them? — The Phari- " ſees which were covetous, did " ſcorn him in his Doctrine. O then " ye ſee that worldly rich men do " ſcorn the Doctrine of their ſalva- " tion; the worldly wiſe men ſcorn " the Doctrine of Chriſt as fooliſh- " neſs to their underſtandings. " Theſe ſcorners have ever been, and " ever ſhall be to the worlds end. " For St. *Peter* propheſied, that ſuch " ſcorners ſhould be in the end be- " fore the laatter day. Take heed " therefore my brethren, take heed: " be ye not ſcorners of Gods moſt " Holy Word: provoke him not to " pour out his wrath upon you, as " he did upon thoſe Gibers and " Mockers: Be not wilfull mur- " derers of your own ſouls. Thus far the Homily.

And no marvel if Prieſts may

be guilty as well as people, if it be true that is ſaid by the Church in Homil. 3. againſt Peril of Idolatry, pag. 56, 57. ["But a true "Preacher to ſtay this miſchief, is in "very many places ſcarcely heard "once in the whole year, and "ſomewhere not once in ſeven "year, as it is evident to be proved. "Further it appeareth not by any "ſtory of credit, that true and "ſincere Preaching hath endured "in any one place above an hun"dred years.] But it is evident that "Images, ſuperſtition, and wor"ſhipping of Images, and Idolatry, "have continued many hundred "years——For Preaching of Gods "Word (moſt ſincere in the begin"ning) by proceſs of time waxed "leſs and leſs pure, and after cor"rupt; and laſt of all altogether "laid down and left off, and other "inventions of men crept in place "of it.—— So that Laity and Cler-

"gy,

"gy, learned and unlearned, all ages, "sects, and degrees of men, women, "and children of whole Christen-"dom (a most horrible and most "dreadful thing to think) have been "at once drowned in abominable "Idolatry, of all other vices most "detested of God, and most damn-"able to man, and that by the space "of eight hundred years. So far the Church of *England*.

And though I am far from crediting the many fabulous stories in that and such other Books; yet I shall recite one instance in the life of *Philip Nerius*, the Father of the Oratorians; which shall shew you, that even among the Papists, holy *serious diligence* where it is, hath the same usage from the prophane both Clergy and Laity, as in other places, and so that every where *Holiness* is persecuted by men professing the same Religion with those they persecute.

 The

The meetings of the Oratorians and their exercises, so like those now abhorr'd by many, are by *Baronius* (that was one of them) thus described, as you may see in the life of *Nerius*, p. 45.

"Certainly by the Divine Wisdom was it brought to pass, that "in our times ——— Assemblies "were instituted in the City, much-what after the form of those "Apostolical Conventions; such "especially as by the Apostle were "appointed for discoursing of Divine matters, both for edifying "the hearers, and for propagating the Church. ——— It was "agreed, that the *zealous Christians* should meet a daies at Saint "*Hieroms* Oratory, and there a "Religious meeting should be held "after this manner: First, silence "being made, they began with "prayer, and one of the brothers "reads some pious lesson. At the "reading

"reading of which, the Father uſed
"to interpoſe upon occaſion, ex-
"plaining more fully, enlarging and
"vehemently inculcating on the
"minds of the auditors the things
"read, continuing his diſcourſe
"ſometime a whole hour (to the
"great ſatisfaction of the hearers)
"dialogue-wiſe, asking ſome of the
"company their opinions of ſuch a
"thing. Afterward, by his ap-
"pointment, one of them went up
"into the desk, raiſed upon ſteps,
"and made an Oration, without
"flouriſhes, or varniſh of Language,
"compoſed out of the approved
"and choice lives of Saints, Sacred
"Writ, and ſentences of holy Fa-
"thers. He that ſucceeded him,
"diſcourſed after the ſame manner,
"but on a differing matter. Then
"followed the third, who related
"ſome part of the Church ſtory
"in the order of its ſeveral ages.
"Every of theſe had his half-hour
"allotted:

" allotted him, and performed all " with marvellous delight and ap- " probation: Then ſinging ſome " Hymn, and going to prayers " again, the company broke up. " All things thus ordered, and ratified by the Pope, as far as the " times would ſuffer, the beautiful " face of the Primitive Apoſtoli- " call aſſembling, ſeemed to be revi- " ved again; whereat all good men " rejoycing, and many taking their " Model from them, the like exer- " ciſes of piety were ſet up and pra- " ctiſed in other places." So far *Baronius*.

If any ſay that this long and zealous exerciſe was not in private houſes; I anſwer, Allow us an Oratory, as the Pope himſelf allowed them, and we had rather far be there than in private houſes: But if any that hinder ſuch from being publick, ſhall then reproach it for being in a leſs publick place, they ſcarce

ſcarce play fair. The Church of *England*, in the third part of the Sermon againſt peril of Idolatry, p. 66, 67. ſaith: "In *Maximinian* "and *Conſtantius* the Emperours "Proclamation, the places where "Chriſtians reſorted to Publick "Prayer, were called Conventicles.] See further.

But how were the Oratorians eſteemed and uſed? In Chap. 16. of *Nerius*'s perſecutions, after the mention of mens rancour and railing that maligned him, it follows, page 56. that "The Prelate that "was Deputy of the City, moved "by the reports of them that bore "a ſpleen to *Philip*, ſent for him, "and reprehended him ſharply: "Is it not a ſhame (ſaith he) "that you who profeſs a con-"tempt of the world, ſhould hunt "for popular applauſe, and walk "through the City guarded with "troops, with ſuch nets as theſe "fiſhing

" fishing for Church-preferments?] " When having shrewdly taunted him with such like expressions, he prohibits him the hearing of Confessions for fifteen dayes, and to use the customs of the Oratory, but by leave first obtained, or to lead about with him any companies of men, threatning imprisonment upon his disobedience: Neither would he let him depart till he put in security for his appearance, saying — Come, you do all this, not for the glory of God, but to make a party for your self. — Mean time, while the good man was commending himself to God, having intreated divers religious persons to be instant in Prayer about this business, one appareth and saith — [This trouble shall be quickly over, and the work that is begun be more strongly confirmed; they who

" resist

"reſiſt now, ſhall aſſiſt hereafter;
"and if any one ſhall dare to op-
"poſe it any longer, God ſhall
"ſpeedily avenge it on him; the
"Prelate, that is your chiefeſt ad-
"verſary, ſhall certainly dye with-
"in fifteen dayes.]——And it
"fell out preciſely as he foretold:
"for the Prelate (the Popes De-
"puty) relating the proceedings
"to his Holineſs ſomewhat par-
"tially, died ſuddenly —— No
"ſooner was this blaze of perſe-
"cution out, but a much fiercer
"was kindled againſt the Order:
"For under pretext of Piety and
"Religion, ſome poſſeſſed the
"Pope that the Preachers of Saint
"*Hieroms* many times delivered
"things ridiculous and unſound,
"which argued high indiſcretion
"or ignorance, and muſt needs
"endanger their hearers. ——]

I would not have troubled you with any of theſe citations, but to let

let thoſe know that are offended at my reproof of impious Miniſters, that in all places and parties in the world where there is any *ſerious diligence* for ſalvation, there are alwaies enemies of the ſame Profeſſion, even among the Clergy as well as others. The hindering of *Holy Diligence* and *Seriouſneſs*, is the work of the Devil and his Inſtruments in the world. The promoting it is the work of Chriſt, and of his ſervants. The great actions of the world are but the conflictings of theſe two Armies, the ſalvation of the Conquerours, and the damnation of the conquered being the end. By this contending for *Faith* and *Holineſs*, and bearing the *Croſs*, I take my ſelf bound to perform my Covenant of [profeſſing the Faith of Chriſt crucified, and manfully fighting under his Banner againſt the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh, to my lives end.] Reader, thou art

art engaged to the like as well as I, and ſhalt be judged accordingly, and reap as thou haſt ſowed. *CHUSE* and *DO* as thou wilt *SPEED*.

The

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THE

Eccleſ. 9. 10.

Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave whither thou goeſt.

THe *mortality of man* being the principal ſubject of *Solomon* in this Chapter, and obſerving that wiſdom and piety exempt not men from death, he firſt hence infers, that *Gods love or hatred* to one man above another, is not to be gathered by his dealing with them here, where *all things* in the common courſe of providence *do come alike to all.* The *common ſin* hath introduced *death* as a

common puniſhment, which levelleth all, and endeth all the *contrivances*, buſineſſes, and enjoyments of this life, to good and bad; and the diſcriminating Juſtice is not *ordinarily* manifeſted here: An *Epicure* or *Infidel* would think *Solomon* were here pleading *their* unmanly impious cauſe: But it is not the *ceſſation* of the *life*, or *operations*, or *enjoyments* of the *ſoul* that he is ſpeaking of, as if there were no life to come, or the ſoul of man were not immortal; But it is the *ceſſation* of all the *actions*, *and honors*, *and pleaſures* of *this life*, which to good or bad ſhall be no more. *Here* they have no more reward, the memory of them will be *here* forgotten. *They have no more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the Sun*, Verſ. 5, 6.

From hence he further inferreth, that the comforts of life are but ſhort and tranſitory, and therefore that what the creature can afford, muſt be preſently taken; And as the wicked

ed ſhall have no more but preſent pleaſures, ſo the faithful may take their lawful comforts in the preſent moderate uſe of creatures; For if their delightful goodneſs be of right and uſe to any, it is to them; And therefore, though they may not uſe them to their hurt, to the pampering of their fleſh, and ſtrenghthening their luſts, and hindering ſpiritual duties, benefits, and ſalvation; yet muſt they *ſerve the Lord with joyfulneſs, and with gladneſs of heart, for the abundance of all things*, which he giveth them, *Deut.* 28.47.

Next he interreth from the brevity of mans life, the *Neceſſity of ſpeed*, and *Diligence in his duty*. And this is in the words of my Text: where you have, 1. *The duty commanded.* 2. *The reaſon* or *motive* to enforce it.

The *Duty* is in the firſt part, [*Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do*] that is, whatever work is aſſigned thee by God to do in this thy tranſitory life,

[*do it with thy might*] (that is, 1. *Speedily*, without delay. 2. *Diligently*; and as well as thou art able, and not with ſloathfulneſs, or by the halves.)

2. The *Motive* is in the latter part; [*For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave whither thou goeſt*] (that is, It muſt be *now or never*: The *grave*, where thy work cannot be done, will quickly end thy opportunities.) The *Caldee* Paraphraſe appropriates the ſenſe too narrowly to *works of Charity*, or *Alms*; [*whatſoever good and Alms giving thou findeſt to do:*] and the Moving Reaſon they read accordingly [*for nothing but thy works of righteouſneſs and mercy follow thee.*] But the words are more general, and the ſenſe is obvious, contained in theſe two Propoſitions.

Doctr. 1. *The work of this life cannot be done, when this life is ended.* Or,

There

There is no working in the grave, to which we are all making haſte.

Doctr. 2. *Therefore while we have time, we muſt do our beſt: or do the work of this preſent life with vigour and diligence.*

It is from an unqueſtionable and commonly acknowledged truth, that *Solomon* here urgeth us to diligence in duty; and therefore to *prove it* would be but loſs of time. As there are *two worlds* for man to live in, and ſo *two lives* for man to live; ſo each of theſe *lives* hath its *peculiar imployment*. This is the life of *preparation*: the *next* is the life of our *reward* or *puniſhment*: We are *now* but in the *Womb* of *Eternity*, and muſt live hereafter in the *open world*. We are *now* but ſet to *ſchool* to *learn* the work that we muſt do for *ever*: This is the time of our *Apprentiſhip*: we are *learning* the *trade* that we muſt *live upon* in Heaven. We *run now*;

that we may *then* receive the *Crown*: we *fight now*, that we may then *triumph* in victory. The *Grave* hath no *work*: But *Heaven* hath *work*, and *Hell* hath *ſuffering*. There is no *Repentance unto life* hereafter: But there is *Repentance unto torment*, and to *deſperation*. There is no *Believing* of a *Happineſs* unſeen in order to the *obtaining* of it: or of a *miſery unſeen* in order to the *eſcaping* of it; nor *believing in a Saviour* in order to *theſe ends*: But there is the *fruition* of the *Happineſs* which was *here believed*; and *feeling* of the *miſery* that men would *not believe*; and *ſuffering* from *him* as a righteous *Judge*, whom they rejected as a *merciful Saviour*. So that it is not *all work* that ceaſeth at our death: but only the work of *this preſent life*.

And indeed no reaſon can ſhew us the leaſt probability of doing our work when our *Time* is done that was given us to do it in. If it can be done, it muſt be, 1. By the *recalling* of our *Time*. 2. By the *return of life*.

3. Or

3. Or by *opportunity* in *another life*? But there is no hope of any of these.

1. Who knoweth not that *Time cannot be recalled*? That which *once Was*, will be no more. *Yesterday* will never come again. *To day* is passing, and will not return. You may work while it is day: but when you have lost that day, it will not return for you to work in. While your *candle burneth*, you may make use of its light: but when it is *done*, it is too late to use it. No force of Medicine, no Orators elegant perswasions, no worldlings wealth, no Princes power, can call back one day or hour of time. If they could, what endeavours would there be used, when extremity hath taught them to value what they now despise? what chaffering would there be *at last*, if *Time* could be *purchased*, for any thing that man can give. Then Misers would bring out their wealth, and say, *All this will I give for one days time of Repentance more*: And Lords

and Knights would lay down their Honors, and say, *Take all, and let us be the baseſt beggars, if we may but have one year of the Time that we miſpent!* Then Kings would lay down their Crowns, and say, *Let us be equal with the loweſt ſubjects, ſo we may but have the time again that we waſted in the Cares and Pleaſures of the world.* *Kingdoms* would then ſeem a *contemptible price* for the recovery of *Time*. The *Time* that is now *idled* and *talkt* away: the *Time* that is now *feaſted* and *complemented* away, that is unneceſſarily *ſported* and *ſlept* away; that is wickedly and preſumptuouſly *ſin'd* away; how *precious* will it one day ſeem to all? How happy a bargain would they think that they had made, if at the dearest rates they could redeem it? The prophaneſt Mariner falls a praying, when he *fears* his *Time* is at an end. If importunity would then prevail, how earneſtly would they pray for the recovery of *Time*, that formerly de-

rided

rided praying, or minded it not, or could not have while, or mocked God with lip-service, and customary forms, and feigned words in stead of praying? What *a Liturgie* would Death teach the trifling Time-despising Gallants, the idle, busie, dreaming-active ambitious, covetous Lovers of this world, if *Time* could be intreated to return! How passionately then would they roar out their requests? *O that we might once see the days of Hope, and Means, and Mercy, which once we saw, and would not see! O that we had those days to spend in penitential tears and prayers, and holy preparations for an endless life, which we spent at cards, in needless recreations, in idle talk, in humouring others, in the pleasing of our flesh, or in the inordinate cares and businesses of the world! O that our youthful vigor might return! that our years might be renewed? that the days we spent in vanity might be recalled! that Ministers might again be sent to us publickly and privately, with the*

meſſage of grace which we once made light of! that the Sun would once more ſhine upon us! and patience and mercy would once more re-aſſume their work!] If cries or tears, or price or pains, would bring back loſt-abuſed Time, how happy were the now-diſtracted, dreaming, dead-hearted, and impenitent world! If it would then ſerve their turn to ſay to the vigilant believers [*Give us of your oyl, for our lamps are gone out,*] or to cry, [*Lord, Lord, open to us*] when the door is ſhut, the *fooliſh* would be ſaved as well as the *wiſe*, *Mat.* 25. 8, 10, 11. But *this is the day of ſalvation! this is the accepted Time*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. While it is called *To day*, hearken, and harden not your hearts, *Pſal.* 95. 8. Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ſtand up from thy ſloathful wilful death, and uſe the light that's afforded thee by Chriſt, *Epheſ.* 5. 14. or elſe the everlaſting utter darkneſs, will ſhortly end thy *Time* and *Hope*.

2. And as *Time* can *never be recalled*,

recalled, ſo *Life* ſhall never be here *reſtored*, *Job* 14. 14. [If a man die, ſhall he live (here) again? *All the days of our appointed time we muſt therefore wait* (in faith and diligence) *till our change ſhall come.*] One Life is appointed us on earth, to diſpatch the work that our everlaſting life dependeth on: And we ſhall have but *One*. Loſe that and all is loſt for ever; Yet you may *hear*, and *read*, and *learn*, and *pray*; but when *this Life* is ended, it ſhall be ſo no more. You ſhall riſe from the Dead indeed to *judgement*, and to the Life that now you are preparing for: but never to ſuch a life *as this on earth*: your life is as the fighting of a Battel; that muſt be won or loſt at once. There is no coming hither again to mend what is done amiſs. Overſights muſt be *preſently* corrected by *Repentance*, or elſe they are everlaſtingly paſt remedy. *Now* if you be not truly converted, *you may be*: If you find that you are carnal and miſerable, you may be healed:

healed: If you are unpardoned, you may be pardoned: If you are Enemies, you may be reconciled to God: But when once the thred of life is cut, your opportunities are at an end. Now you may enquire of your friends and Teachers, what a poor ſoul muſt do that he may be ſaved, and you may receive particular inſtructions and exhortations, and God may bleſs them to the illuminating, renewing and ſaving of your ſouls: But when Life is paſt, it will be ſo no more. O then, if deſperate ſouls might but return, and *once more*, be tried with the means of life, what joyful tidings would it be! How welcome would the meſſenger be that bringeth it! Had *Hell* but ſuch an offer as this, and would *any cryes* procure it from their righteous Judge, O what a change would be among them! How importunately would they cry to God, O ſend us once again unto the Earth? Once more let us ſee the face

of

of Mercy, and hear the tenders of Christ and of salvation? Once more let the Ministers offer us their helps, and teach us in season and out of season, in publick and in private, and we will refuse their help and exhortations no more: we will hate them, and drive them away from our houses and Towns no more: Once more let us have thy Word, and Ordinances, and try whether we will not believe them, and use them better than we did. Once more let us have the help and company of thy Saints, and we will scorn them, and abuse them, and persecute them no more. O for the great unvaluable Mercy of such a Life as once we had! O Try us once more with such a life, and see whether we will not contemn the world, and close with Christ, and live as strictly, and pray as earnestly, as those that we hated and abused for so doing: O that we might once more be admitted into the holy Assemblies, and have the Lords

Days

Days to ſpend in the buſineſs of our ſalvation! We would plead no more againſt the power and purity of the Ordinances; We would no more call that day a burthen, nor hate them that ſpent it in works of Holineſs, nor plead for the liberty of the fleſh therein.

It makes my heart even ſhake within me, to think with what cries thoſe damned ſouls would ſtrive with God, and how they would roar out [*O try us once again,*] if they had but the *leaſt* encouragement of *Hope!* But *it will not be, It muſt not be!* They *had* their *Day*, and would not know it: They cannot *loſe* their *Time* and *have* it. They had faithful Guides, and would not follow them: Teachers they had, but would not learn. The duſt of their feet muſt witneſs againſt them; becauſe their entertained obeyed meſſage, cannot witneſs for them. *Long* did Chriſt wait with the patient tenders of his blood and ſpirit; His Grace

was

was long and earneſtly offered them, but could not be regarded and received: And they cannot finally refuſe a Chriſt, and yet have a Chriſt; or refuſe his mercy, and yet be ſaved by it. He that would have *Lazarus* ſent from the *dead* to *warn* his unbelieving *Brethren* on Earth, no doubt would have ſtrongly purpoſed *himſelf* on a reformation, if he might *once more* have been tried: And how earneſtly would he have beg'd for ſuch a *Trial*, that beg'd ſo hard for a drop of water? *Luke* 16. 24, 27, 28. But alas, ſuch mouths muſt be ſtopt for ever with a [*Remember that thou in thy life time receivedſt thy good things,*] v. 25.

So that *it is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgement*, Hebr. 9. 27. But there's no return to earth again: The places of your abode, imployment and delight ſhall know you no more. You muſt ſee theſe faces of your friends, and converſe in fleſh with men no more!

This

This world, *these* houſes, *that* wealth and Honour, as to any fruition, muſt be to you as if you had never known them. You muſt aſſemble here but a little while! yet a little longer, and we muſt preach, and you muſt hear it no more for ever. That therefore which you will do, muſt *preſently* be done, or it will be too late. If *ever* you will Repent and Believe, it muſt be *Now*. If *ever* you will be converted and ſanctified, it muſt be *Now*. If *ever* you will be pardoned and reconciled to God, it muſt be *Now*. If *ever* you will reign, its now that you muſt fight and conquer. O that you were wiſe, that you underſtood this, and that you would conſider your latter end, *Deut.* 32. 29. And that you would let thoſe words *ſink down* into your *hearts*, which came from the *heart* of the Redeemer, as was witneſſed by his tears, *Luke* 19. 41, 42. [*If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto*

unto thy peace. But now they are hidden from thine eyes.] And that these warnings may not be the less regarded, because you have so *often* heard them, when often hearing increaseth your obligation, and diminisheth not the truth, or your danger.

3. And as there is no *Return* to *Earth*, so is there no doing *this work* hereafter. Heaven and Hell are for *other work*. If the Infant be *dead born*, the open world will not *revive* him; That which is generated, and born a *beast*, or *serpent*, will not by all the influences of the Heavens, or all the powers of Sun or Earth, become a *Man*. The *second* and *third* concoction presuppose the *first*; The *harvest* doth presuppose the *seed-time*, and the labour of the husbandman. Its *now* that you must *sow*, and *hereafter* that you must *reap*. It's *now* that you must *work*, and then that you must receive your *wages*.

Is

Is this believed and considered by the sleepy world? Alas sirs, do you live as men that must live here no more? Do you work as men that must work no more, and pray as men that must pray no more, when once the Time of work is ended? What thinkest thou poor besotted sinner! will God command *the Sun to stand still*, while thou rebellest or forgettest *thy work* and *him?* Dost thou look he should pervert the course of *nature*, and continue the Spring and Seed-time till thou hast a *mind* to *sow?* or that he will return the dead-born or mishapen Infant into the womb, that it may be better formed or quickened? Will he renew thy age, and make thee young again, and call back the hours that thou prodigally wastedst on thy lusts and idleness? Canst thou look for this at the hand of God, when Nature and Scripture assure thee of the contrary? If not, why hast thou not yet done with thy beloved sins?

Why

Why haſt thou not yet begun to live? Why ſitteſt thou ſtill while thy ſoul is unrenewed, and all thy preparation for death and judgement is yet to make? How fain would Satan find thee thus at death? How fain would he have leave to blow out thy candle, before thou haſt entred into the way of life? Doſt thou look to have Preachers ſent after thee, to bring thee the mercy which thy contempt here left behind? Wilt thou hear and be converted in the Grave and Hell? or wilt thou be ſaved without holineſs? that is, In deſpight of God that hath reſolved, it *ſhall not be*. O ye *ſons of ſleep*, *of death*, of *darkneſs*, *awake*, and *live*, and *hear the Lord*, before the Grave and Hell have ſhut their mouths upon you! *Hear now*, leſt hearing be too late! *Hear now*, if you will *ever* hear. *Hear now*, if you *have ears to hear*! And O ye ſons of *Light*, that ſee what ſleeping ſinners ſee not, call to them, and ring them ſuch a peal of lamenta-

lamentations, tears, and compaſſionate intreaties, as is ſuited to ſuch a dead and dolefull ſtate; Who knows but God may bleſs it to awake them?

If any of you be ſo far awakened, as to ask me what I am calling you to do; My Text tells you in general, Up and be Doing: Look about you, and ſee what you have to do, and Do it with your might.

1. [Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do] That is, whatſoever is a Duty impoſed by the Lord, whatſoever is a Means conducing to thy own or others welfare; Whatſoever *Neceſſity calleth* thee to do, and *Opportunity alloweth* thee to do.

[*Thy hand findeth*] that is, Thy executive powers by the conduct of thy underſtanding, is now to do.

[*Do it with thy Might:* Do thy beſt in it. 1. *Trifle not*, but do it *preſently*, without *unneceſſary Delay*. 2. Do it *Reſolutely:* Remain not *doubtful*, *unreſolved*, in ſuſpenſe, as if it were

were yet a *queſtion* with thee whether thou ſhouldſt do it, or not.

3. Do it with thy moſt *awakened affections*, and ſerious intention of the powers of thy ſoul. *Sleepineſs* and *inſenſibility* are moſt unſuitable to ſuch works. It is a *peculiar people zealous of good works*, that Chriſt hath purchaſed to himſelf, *Tit.* 2. 14.

4. Do it with all *neceſſary forecaſt* and contrivance: Not with a *diſtracting hindering Care*; but with ſuch a Care as may ſhew that you deſpiſe not your Maſter, and are not regardleſs of his work: And with ſuch a care as is ſuited to the difficulties and nature of the thing, and is neceſſary to the due accompliſhment.

5. Do it not ſloathfully, but vigorouſly and with diligence. Stick not at thy labour: Leſt thou hear [*Thou wicked and ſloathfull ſervant*, Mat. 25. 26. *Hide not thy hand in thy boſome with the ſloathfull*, and ſay not, *There*

There is a Lion in the way, Prov. 26. 13, 14. The *negligent* and the *vicious*, the *waſter* and the *ſlothfull*, differ but as *one brother* from *another*, Prov. 18. 9. As the *ſelf-murder* of the wilfully ungodly, ſo alſo the *deſire* of the *ſloathfull* killeth him, becauſe his hands refuſe to labour, *Prov.* 21. 25. The ſoul of the ſluggard *deſireth* and hath *nothing*; but the ſoul of the diligent ſhall be made fat, *Pro.* 13. 4. *Be not ſloathfull in buſineſs, but be fervent in ſpirit ſerving the Lord*, Rom. 12. 11.

6. Do it with *Conſtancy*, and not with deſtructive pawſes and intermiſſions, or with wearineſs and turning back. *The righteous ſhall hold on his way, and he that is of clean hands ſhall be ſtronger and ſtronger*, Job 17. 9. *Be ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord; foraſmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15. 58. *Be not weary of well-doing: for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap if we faint not*, Gal.

Gal. 6. 9. Theſe ſix particulars are neceſſary, if you will obſerve the precept in my Text.

But that miſunderſtanding hinder not the performance, I ſhall acquaint you further with the ſenſe, by theſe few explicatory cautions.

1. The *Might* and *Diligence* here required, excludeth not the neceſſity of *Deliberation* and *Prudent* conduct. Otherwiſe, the *faſter* you go, the *further* you may go out of the way; and miſguided zeal may ſpoil all the work, and make it but an injury to others or your ſelves. A little imprudence in the ſeaſon, and order, and manner of a duty, ſometimes may ſpoil it, and hinder the ſucceſs, and and make it do more hurt than good. How many a Sermon, or Prayer, or reproof, is made the matter of deriſion and contempt, for ſome imprudent paſſages or deportment? God ſendeth not his ſervants to be *jeſters* of the world, or to play the *mad men* as *David* in his fears: we muſt be

wiſe and *innocent*, as well as *reſolute* and *valiant*: Though *fleſhly and worldly wiſdom* be not deſireable, as being but *fooliſhneſs* with God; yet the *wiſdom which is from above, and is firſt pure, and then peaceable*, and is acquainted with the high and hidden myſteries, and is *juſtified of her children*, muſt be the *Guide* of all our holy actions. Holineſs is not *blind*: *Illumination* is the firſt part of Sanctification. Believers are *Children of the Light*. Nothing requireth ſo much *wiſdom* as the matters of God, and of our ſalvation. Folly is moſt unſuitable to ſuch excellent imployments, and moſt unbeſeeming the ſons of the moſt High. It is a *ſpirit of wiſdom* that animateth all the Saints, 1 *Cor.* 3. 19. & 2. 6, 7. *Eph.* 1. 8, 17. *Col.* 3. 16. It is the *treaſures of wiſdom* that dwell in Chriſt, and are communicated to his members, *Col.* 2. 3. We muſt *walk in wiſdom toward them that are without*, Col. 4. 5. And our *works* muſt be *ſhewn*

out

out of a good converſation, with meekneſs of wiſdom, Jam. 3. 13. Yet I muſt needs ſay, that its more in *great things* than in *ſmall*, in the *ſubſtance* than the *circumſtances*; in a *ſound judgement* and *eſtimate* of things, and ſuitable choice and proſecution, than in *fine expreſſions* or *deportment* anſwering proud mens expectations.

2. Though you muſt *work* with your *Might*, yet with a *diverſity* agreeable to the quality of your ſeveral works. Some works muſt be preferred before others: All cannot be done at once. That's *a ſin* out of ſeaſon, which in ſeaſon is a *duty*. The *Greateſt*, and the *moſt urgent* work muſt be preferred. And *ſome works* muſt be done with *double fervour* and reſolution, and ſome with *leſs*. Buying, and ſelling, and marrying, and poſſeſſing, and uſing the world, muſt be done with a fear of *overdoing*, and in a ſort *as if we did them not*, though *they* alſo muſt have a neceſſary dili-

gence, 1 *Corinth.* 7. 29, 30, 31. *God's Kingdom* and its *Righteousness* must be *first sought*, Mat. 6. 33. And our *labour for the meat that perisheth*, must be comparatively as *none*, Joh. 6. 27.

3. Lastly, it is not an *irregular*, nor a *self-disturbing*, *vexatious violence* that is required of us: but a sweet well-setled resolution, and a delightful expeditious diligence, that makes the wheels go merrily on, and the more easily get over those rubs and difficulties, that clog and stop a sloathful soul.

And now will you lend me the *assistance* of your *Consciences*, for the transcribing of this command of God upon your hearts, and taking out a Copy of this order, for the regulating of your lives? [*Whatsoever*] is not a word so *comprehensive* as to include any *vanity* or *sin*; but so *comprehensive* as to include *all your Duty*.

1. (To

1. (To begin with the *lowest*:) the very works of your *bodily callings* must have *diligence*. *In the sweat of your brows you must eat your bread*, Gen. 3. 19. *Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do*, Exod. 20. 9. *He that will not work, let him not eat*, 2 Thess. 3. 10. *Disorderly walkers, busie-bodies, that will not work with quietness, and eat their own bread*, are to be *avoided* and *shamed* by the Church, 2 *Thess.* 3. 6, 11, 12, 14. *Lazy servants* are unfaithful to men, and disobedient to God, who commandeth them to *obey their Masters according to the flesh* (unbelieving, ungodly Masters) *in all things* (that concerns their service) *and that not with eye-service as man-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, and in the fear of God, doing whatsoever they do as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord* (even for this) *they shall receive the reward of the inheritance*, Col. 3. 22, 23, 24. *But he that doth wrong* (by sloathfulness, or unfaithful-

ness) *shall receive for the wrong which he hath done*, ver. 25.

Success is Gods ordinary temporal reward of *diligence*, Prov. 10. 4. & 12. 24, 27. And diseases, poverty, shame, disappointment, or self-tormenting melancholy, are his usual punishments of sloath. *Hard labor* redeemeth *Time:* you will have the more to lay *out* on greater *works:* The *sluthful* is still *behind-hand*, and therefore must leave much of his work undone.

2. Are you *Parents* or *Governors* of *Families*! you have *work to do* for *God*, and for *your Childrens and servants souls: Do it with your might:* Deal *wisely*, but *seriously* and *frequently* with them about their sin, their duty, and their hopes of heaven; Tell them *whither* they are going, and *which way* they must go: Make them understand that they have a *higher Father* and *Master* that must be first served, and *greater* work to do than *yours*. *Waken* them from their natural

ral *inſenſibility* and *ſloath*: Turn not all your *family duties* into *lifeleſs cuſtomary forms* (whether *extemporate*, or by *rote*) ſpeak about God, and Heaven, and Hell, and Holineſs, with that ſerioufneſs as beſeems men that believe what they ſay, and would have thoſe they ſpeak to, to believe it. Talk not either drowſily, or lightly, or jeaſtingly of ſuch dreadful, or joyful, unexpreſſible things. Remember, that *your families* and *you*, are going to the grave, and to the world where there is no more room for your exhortations. There is no *Catechiſing*, *examining*, or *ſerious inſtructing* them in the *grave* whither they and you are going. *It muſt be now or never: And therefore do it with your might.* The *words of God* muſt be *in your hearts*, and you *muſt diligently teach them to your children, talking of them when you ſit in your houſes, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you riſe up*, Deut. 6. 6, 7, 8. & 11. 18, 19, 20.

3. Have you *ignorant* or *ungodly neighbours*, whose misery calls for your compassion, and relief? Speak to them and help them with *prudent diligence*. Lose not your opportunities: Stay not till *Death* hath stopt your *mouths*, or stopt their *ears*. Stay not till they are out of Hearing, and taken from your converse. Stay not till they are *in Hell*, before you warn them *of it*, or till Heaven be lost, before you have seriously called to them to remember it. Go to their houses: take all opportunities: stoop to their infirmities: bear with unthankfull frowardness: It is *for mens salvation*: Remember there is no place for your instructions or exhortations in the *Grave* or *Hell*. *Your dust* cannot speak, and *their dust* cannot hear: Up therefore and be doing with all your might.

4. Hath God intrusted you with the *Riches of this world*; with *many* talents or with *few*, by which he looketh you should relieve the needy, and especially

eſpecially ſhould promote thoſe works of *piety* which are the greateſt *charity? Give* (prudently, but willingly and liberally) while you have to give. It is *your Gain*: The time of *market* for your ſouls: and of *laying up a treaſure in Heaven*; and ſetting your money to the moſt gainfull uſury; and of *making you friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs*; and *furthering* your ſalvation, by that which *hindereth* other mens, and occaſioneth their perdition. [*As you have opportunity, do good to all men, but eſpecially to them of the houſhold of faith*] Gal. 6. 6, 7, 8, 9, 12. [*Caſt thy bread upon the waters; for thou ſhalt find it after many dayes. Give a portion to ſeven and to eight; for thou knoweſt not what evil may be upon the earth*] Eccleſ. 11. 1, 2. [*In the morning ſow thy ſeed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand: for thou knoweſt not whether ſhall proſper, this or that, or whether they both ſhall be alike good*] v. 6. [*Withhold not good from them to*

whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it: Say not to thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give, when thou haſt it by thee,] Prov. 3. 27, 28. *Lay up a foundation for the time to come: Do good before thy heart be hardened, thy riches blaſted and conſumed, thy opportunities taken away; part with it before it part with thee.* Remember it muſt be *Now* or *Never:* There is no working in the Grave.

5. Hath God intruſted you with *Power* or *Intereſt*, by which you may promote his honor in the world, and relieve the oppreſſed, and reſtrain the rage of impious malice! Hath he made you *Governors*, and put the Sword of Juſtice into your hands? up then and be doing with your might. Defend the innocent, protect the ſervants of the Lord, cheriſh them that do well, be a terror to the wicked, encourage the *ſtricteſt obedience* to the univerſal Governor,

diſcoun-

diſcountenance the breakers of his Laws: Look not to be reverenced or obeyed *before him*, or more carefully than he: Openly maintain his Truth and worſhip without fear or ſhame: Deal gently and tenderly with his lambs and little ones: Search after vice that you may ſucceſsfully ſuppreſs it. Hate thoſe temptations that would draw you to man-pleaſing, temporizing, remiſneſs, or countenancing ſin; but eſpecially thoſe that would enſnare you in a *controverſie with Heaven*, and in quarrels againſt the *ways of Holineſs*; or in that ſelf-confounding ſin of abuſing and oppoſing the people that are moſt careful to pleaſe the Lord. Your truſt is great, and ſo is your advantage to do good; And how great will be your account, and how dreadful, if you be unfaithful? As you *ſignifie* more than hundreds or thouſands of the meaner ſort, and your actions do *moſt good* or *hurt*; ſo you muſt expect to be accordingly *dealt with*, when

you come to the impartial, final judgement. Befriend the Gospel as the Charter of your everlasting priviledges; own *those* that Christ hath told you *he will own*. Use them as men that are ready to hear [*Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my Brethren, you did it unto me*] Mat. 25. *Know not a wicked person*: but let *your eyes be on the faithful of the land, that they may dwell therein, and lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty*, Psal. 101. 1 Tim. 2. 2. [*Let those that work the work of the Lord, be with you without fear*] 1 Cor. 16. 10. Remember that it is the Character of a *Pharisee* and *Hypocrite*, to see the *mote of the non-observance of a ceremony*, or *tradition*, or *smaller matter* of difference in Religion in *their Brothers eye*, and not to see the beam of *hypocrisie*, *injustice* and *malicious cruel-opposition* of Christ and his Disciples in their *own eyes*: And that it's the brand of them that *please not God*, that are *filling up their sins*,

on

on whom *Gods wrath* is coming *to the utmoſt*, to *perſecute the ſervants of the Lord, forbidding them to Preach to the people that they might be ſaved*, 1 Theſſ. 2, 15, 16.

Learn well the *ſecond*, and the *hundred and firſt* Pſalm: And *write* theſe ſentences on your *walls* and *doors*, as an Antidote againſt that ſelf-undoing ſin: *Matth.* 18. 6. *Whoſoever ſhall offend one of theſe little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-ſtone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the ſea.*] Zach. 2. 8. [*He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.*] Rom. 14, 1, 2. and 15. 1. [*Him that is weak in the faith, receive you; but not to doubtful diſputations.*——*For God hath received him.*] Mat. 10, 40, 41, 42. [*He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me. He that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, ſhall receive a righteous mans reward:*

ward: And whoſo ſhall give to drink to one of theſe little ones, a cup of cold water only in the name of a Diſciple, Verily I ſay unto you, he ſhall in no wiſe loſe his reward.] If you love not the *Godly*, love *your ſelves* (ſo far as to ſuch ſelf-love is poſſible), wound not your *own hearts*, to make their *fingers bleed*. *Dam not* your *ſouls* (and that by the *ſureſt*, *neareſt* way) that you may hurt *their bodies*. Provoke not God to *thruſt you* from his preſence, and deny your ſuits, by your *dealing ſo with them*: ſtop not your *own mouthes*, when your miſery will beſpeak your loudeſt cries for mercy, by your ſtopping the mouthes of the ſervants of the Lord, and refuſing to hear their requeſts for Juſtice. If you have the Serpents enmity againſt the womans ſeed, you muſt expect the Serpents doom: *Your heads will be bruiſed*, when you have *bruſed their heels*, Geneſ. 3. 15. *Kick not againſt the pricks*, Acts 9. Let not *bryers and horns ſet themſelves in battel*

battel againſt the Lord, leſt he go therefore through them, and burn them together, Iſa. 27. 4.

I ſpeak not any of this by way of *accuſation*, or *diſhonorable reflection* on the *Magiſtrate*. Bleſſed be God that hath given us the comfort of *your defence*. But knowing what the Tempter aimeth at, and where it is that your danger lieth, and by what means the Rulers of the earth have been undone, faithfulneſs commandeth me to tell you of the *ſnare*, and to ſet before you *good* and *evil*, as ever I would eſcape the guilt of betraying you by flattery, or cruel and cowardly ſilence.

And eſpecially when your *Magiſtracy* is but *annual*, or for a *ſhort time*, it concerneth you to be *doing with your might*. *It is* but *this year*, or ſhort ſpace of time, that you have to do this ſpecial ſervice in; Loſe *this* and loſe *all*. By what men on earth ſhould God be eminently ſerved and honored, if not by Magiſtrates, whom he

he hath eminently advanced, impowred and intruſted? With conſiderate foreſight, ſeriouſly ask your ſelves the queſtion, Are you willing to hear, at the day of your accounts, that you had but *one year*, or a *few*, to do God *ſpecial ſervice in*, and that you *knew this*, and yet *would not do it?* Can your hearts bear it then, to hear and think, that you *loſt*, and *wilfully loſt* ſuch an opportunity? Look about you then, and ſee what is to be done. Are there not *Alehouſes* to be ſuppreſt, and *drunkards* and riotous perſons to be reſtrained; Preaching and Piety to be *promoted? Do it with your Might:* For it muſt be *Now or Never.*

6. To come yet a little nearer you, and ſpeak of the work that is yet to be done in your *own ſouls*; Are any of you yet in the *ſtate of unrenewed nature*, born *only* of the *fleſh*, and not of the *Spirit*, Joh. 3. 3, 5, 6. *Minding the things of the fleſh, and not the things of the Spirit?* Rom. 8. 1, 5, 7, 9, 13.

7, 9, 13. and consequently yet in the *power of Satan, taken captive by him at his will*, Acts 26. 18. 2 *Tim.* 2. 26, 27. *Up and be doing*, if thou love thy soul. If thou care whether thou be in *Joy* or *Misery for ever*, bewail thy sin and spiritual distress: Make out to Christ, cry mightily to him for his renewing and reconciling pardoning grace: Plead his satisfaction, his merits and his promises; Away with thy rebellion, and thy beloved sin; Deliver up thy soul entirely to Christ, to be sanctified, governed and saved by him. Make no more demurrs about it; it is not a matter to be questioned, or trifled in. Let the *earth* be acquainted with thy *bended knees*, and the *aire* with thy *complaints* and *cries*, and *men* with thy *confessions* and *enquiries* after the way of life; and *heaven* with thy sorrows, desires and resolutions, till thy *soul* be *acquainted* with the *Spirit of Christ*, (Rom. 8. 9.) and with the *new*, the *holy* and *heavenly nature*;

and

and thy *heart* have received the *tranſcript* of *Gods Law*, the *impreſs* of the *Goſpel*, and ſo the *Image* of thy *Creator* and *Redeemer*. Ply this work with *all thy might*: For there is no *Converſion*, *Renovation*, or *Repentance unto life*, in the *grave* whither thou goeſt. It muſt be *Now* or *Never*. And *Never ſaved*, if *Never ſanctified*, Heb. 12. 14.

7. Haſt thou any *prevailing ſin to mortifie*, that either *reigneth* in thee, or woundeth thee and keepeth thy ſoul in darkneſs and unacquaintedneſs with God? Aſſault it reſolutely: Reject it ſpeedily: Abhorr the motions of it: Turn away from the perſons or things that would entice thee. Hate the *doors* of the Harlot, and of the Alehouſe, or the gaming houſe: and go not as the *Ox to the ſlaughter*, and as a *bird to the fowlers ſnare*, and as a *fool to the correction of the ſtocks, as if thou kneweſt not that it is for thy life*,] Prov. 7. 22, 23. Why thou befooled ſtupid ſoul! *wilt thou*

be *taſting* of the poyſoned cup? *wilt* thou be *ſporting* thee with the *bait?* Haſt thou *no where* to *walk* or *play thee*, but at the brink of hell? *Muſt not the fleſh be crucified with its affections and luſts?* Gal. 5. 24. *Muſt* it not be *tamed* and *mortified*, or thy ſoul condemned? Rom. 8. 13. 1 Cor. 9. 27. *Run not therefore as at uncertainty: fight not as one that beats the air*, ver. 26. ſeeing this *muſt* be done, or thou art undone, delay and dally with ſin no longer: Let this be the day; reſolve, and reſiſt it with thy might: It muſt be *Now* or *Never*: when death comes, it is too late. It will be then no reward to leave thy ſin, which thou canſt keep no longer: No part of Holineſs or Happineſs, that thou art not drunk, or proud, or luſtfull in the grave or hell. As thou art wiſe therefore, *know* and *take* thy *Time*.

8. Art thou in a *declined lapſed ſtate?* decayed in grace? Haſt thou loſt thy firſt deſires and love? do thy

thy *first works*, and do them *with thy might*. Delay not, but remember from whence thou art fallen, and what thou haſt loſt by it; and into how ſad a caſe thy folly and negligence hath brought thee: ſay, *I will go and return to my firſt husband; for then was it better with me than now*, Hoſ. 2. 7. Cry out with *Job* 29. 2, 3, 4, 5. [*O that I were as in months paſt! as in the dayes when God preſerved me! when his candle ſhined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkneſs. As I was in the dayes of my youth, when the ſecret of God was on my tabernacle, when the Almighty was yet with me.*—] *Return* while thou *haſt day*, leſt the *night ſurprize* thee: Loyter and delay no more; thou haſt loſt by it already: thou *art* far behind hand. Beſtir thee therefore with all thy *might*.

9. Art thou in the *darkneſs of uncertainty* concerning thy *converſion*, and thy *everlaſting ſtate?* Doſt thou not *know* whether thou be in a ſtate of

of life or death? and what ſhould become of thee, if *this were the day* or *hour* of thy change? If thou art *careſull about it*, and *enquireſt*, and *uſeſt the means* that God hath appointed thee for aſſurance: I have then no more to ſay to thee now, but, *wait* on God, and thou ſhalt not be diſappointed or aſhamed! Thou ſhalt have aſſurance in due time, or be ſaved before thou wouldſt believe thou ſhouldſt be ſaved. Be patient and obedient, and the light of Chriſt will ſhine upon thee, and yet thou ſhalt ſee the dayes of Peace. But if thou art *careleſs* in thy *uncertainty*, and mindeſt not ſo great a buſineſs, be awakened and call thy ſoul to its account; ſearch and examine thy heart and life: Read, and conſider, and take advice of faithfull guides. Canſt thou careleſly ſleep, and laugh, and ſport, and follow thy leſſer buſineſs as if thy ſalvation were made ſure, when thou knoweſt not *where* thou muſt *dwell for ever? examine*

your

your ſelves whether you be in the faith; prove your ſelves; know ye not your own ſelves, that Chriſt is in you except you are reprobates? 2 Cor. 13. 5. *Give all diligence* (in time) *to make your calling and election ſure*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. In the *Grave* and *Hell* there is no making ſure of Heaven: you are then paſt enquiries and ſelf-examinations, in order to any recovery or *hope*. Another kind of tryal will finally *reſolve* you. Up therefore and diligently ply the work: it muſt be *Now* or *Never*.

10. In all the *duties* of thy *Profeſſion* of *Piety*, *Juſtice*, or *Charity*, to *God*, *thy ſelf*, or *others*, *up and be doing with thy might*. Art thou ſeeking to enflame thy ſoul with *love* to God? plunge thy ſelf in the Ocean of his *love*; admire his mercies; gaze upon the repreſentations of his tranſcendent goodneſs; *O taſte and ſee that the Lord is gracious*! Remember that he muſt be *Loved with all thy heart and ſoul and might*; canſt thou pour

pour out thy love upon a creature, and give but a few barren drops to God?

When thou art *Fearing him*, let his Fear *command* thy ſoul, and conquer all the fear of man.

When thou art *Truſting him*, do it without diſtruſt, and caſt all thy care and thy ſelf upon him: Truſt him as a creature ſhould truſt his God, and the members of Chriſt ſhould truſt their Head and dear Redeemer.

When thou art making mention of his great and dreadfull *name*, O do it with *Reverence*, and *awe*, and *admiration*: And *take not the name of God in vain*.

When thou art *Reading his Word*, let the Majeſty of the Author, and the Greatneſs of the matter, and the Gravity of the ſtile, poſſeſs thee with an obediential fear. Love it, and let it be ſweeter to thee than the honey-comb, and preciouſer than thouſands of Gold and Silver. Reſolve

ſolve to do what there thou findeſt to be the will of God. When thou art *praying in ſecret*, or in thy *family*, *Do it with thy might*: Cry mightily to God, as a ſoul under ſin, and wants, and danger, that is ſtepping into an endleſs life, ſhould do. Let the reverence and the fervour of thy prayers ſhew that it's *God himſelf* that thou art ſpeaking to: that it's *Heaven it ſelf* that thou art praying for; *Hell it ſelf* that thou art praying to be ſaved from. Wilt thou be dull and ſenſleſs on *ſuch an errand* to the *Living God?* Remember what lieth upon thy *failing* or *prevailing*: and that it muſt be *Now* or *Never*.

Art thou a *Preacher of the Goſpel*, and takeſt charge of the *ſouls of men? Take heed to thy ſelf and to the whole flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made thee an Overſeer, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.* Let not the blood of ſouls, and the blood that purchaſed them, be required at thy hands,

hands, *Acts* 20. 28. *Ezek.* 3. 18, 20. Thou *art charged before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom, that thou preach the word, be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine,* 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. *Teach every man, and exhort every man,* Col. 1. 28. *even night and day with tears,* Acts 20. 31. *Save men with fear, pulling them out of the fire,* Jud. *Cry aloud: lift up thy voice like a trumpet: tell them of their transgressions,* Isa. 58. 1. *Yet thou* art *alive*, and *they alive: yet* thou hast a tongue, and they have ears: The final sentence hath not yet cut off their hopes. *Preach* therefore, and *Preach with all thy Might.* Exhort them *privately* and *personally with all the seriousness* thou canst. *Quickly*, or it will be *too late. Prudently*, or Satan will *overreach thee: Fervently*, or thy words are like to be disregarded. Remember when thou lookest them in the faces,

faces, when thou beholdeſt the Aſſemblies, that They muſt be *Converted* or *Condemned*; *ſanctified* on *Earth*, or *tormented* in *Hell*; and that *this is the Day:* It muſt be *Now* or *Never*.

In a word, Apply this *quickning precept* to *all the duties* of thy Chriſtian courſe. Be *Religious*, and *Juſt*, and *Charitable* in *good ſadneſs*, if you would be taken for ſuch when you look for the reward. *Work out your ſalvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. 2. 12. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate; for many ſhall ſeek to enter and ſhall not be able*, Mat. 7. 13. Luke 12. 24. *Many run, but few receive the prize: ſo run that you may obtain*, 1 Corinth. 9. 24. *If the Righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly and the ſinner appear?* 1 Pet. 4. 18. Let the doting world deride your diligence, and ſet themſelves to hinder and afflict you: It will be but a little while before experience change their minds, and make them ſing another ſong. Follow Chriſt fully:

Ply

Ply your work, and loſe no time. The Judge is coming. Let not words nor any thing that man can do, prevail with you to ſit down, or ſtop you in a journey of ſuch importance. Pleaſe God, though fleſh, and friends, and all the world ſhould be diſpleaſed. Whatever come of your Reputation, or Eſtates, or Liberties, or Lives, be ſure you look to Life Eternal; and caſt not that on any hazard, for a withering flower, or a pleaſant dream, or a picture of commodity, or any vanity that the Deceiver can preſent. *For what ſhall it profit you to win the world and loſe your ſoul?* Mat. 16. 26. Or to have been honoured and obeyed on Earth, when you are under the wrath of God in Hell? Or that your fleſh was once provided with variety of delights, when it's turned to rottenneſs, and muſt be raiſed to torments? Hold on therefore in Faith, and Holineſs, and Hope, though Earth and Hell ſhould rage againſt you; though all the World

by force or flattery, ſhould do the worſt they can to hinder you. This is your trial: your *warfare*, is the *Reſiſting* of *deceit*, and of all that would *tempt* you to *Conſent* to the means of your own deſtruction: *Conſent not*, and you *conquer*: *Conquer*, and you are *Crowned*. The *combat* is all about *your Wills*; *Yield*, and you have *loſt the day*. If the prating of ungodly fools, or the contemptuous jears of hardened ſinners, or the frowns of unſanctified Superiors, could prevail againſt the Spirit of Chriſt, and the workings of an enlightened mind, then what man would be ſaved? You *deſerve* damnation, if you will run into it to avoid a *mock*, or the loſs of any thing that man can take from you. You are unmeet for heaven, if you can part with it to ſave your purſes. *Fear not them that can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but fear him that can deſtroy both ſoul and body in Hell*, Mat. 10. 28. Luke 12. 4, 5.

12. 4, 5. Obey God, though all the world forbid you. No power can ſave you from his Juſtice: And none of them can deprive you of his Reward. Though you loſe your *Heads*, you ſhall ſave your *Crowns*: You no way ſave your lives ſo certainly, as by ſuch loſing them, *Mat.* 10. 39. *One thing is neceſſary*: Do that with ſpeed, and care, and diligence, which *muſt* be done, or you are loſt for ever. They that are now againſt your much and earneſt praying, will ſhortly cry as loud themſelves in vain; When it is too late, how fervently will they beg for mercy, that now deride you for valuing and ſeeking it in time! But *then they ſhall call upon God, but he will not anſwer: they ſhall ſeek him early, but ſhall not find him: For that they hated knowledge, and did not chooſe the fear of the Lord: They would none of his counſel, but deſpiſed all his reproof.* Prov. 1. 24. to the end.

Up therefore and work with all thy *might*. Let *unbelievers trifle*, that

know not that the righteous God ſtands over them, and know not that they are *now* to work for everlaſting, and know that Heaven or Hell is at the end. Let them delay, and laugh, and play, and dream away their Time, that are drunk with proſperity, and mad with fleſhly luſts and pleaſures, and have loſt their Reaſon in the cares, and deluſions, and vain-glory of the world. But ſhall it be ſo with *thee* whoſe eyes are opened, who ſeeſt the God, the Heaven, the Hell, which they do *but hear of* as unlikely things? Wilt thou *live awake*, as they that are aſleep? Wilt *thou* do in the *day-light*, as they do in *the dark?* ſhall *Freemen* live as *Satans ſlaves?* ſhall the *Living lie as ſtill* and uſeleſs as the *dead?* Work then while it is day; for the night is coming when none can work, *John* 9. 4.

It is not the works of the Moſaical Law, nor works that are conceited for their proper value to deſerve any

any thing at the hands of God, that I am all this while perſwading you to: But it is the works preſcribed you by Chriſt in the Goſpel according to which you ſhall be ſhortly judged to *joy* or *miſery*, by Chriſt himſelf, that will call you to account. Theſe muſt be done with all your *Might*.

Object. But (you'l ſay perhaps) alas, *what Might have we? We have no ſufficiency of our ſelves; without Chriſt we can do nothing! And this we find when it comes to the trial.*

Anſw. 1. It is not a *Might* that is *originally thine own*, that I am calling thee to exerciſe: but that which thou haſt *already* received from God, and that which *he is ready* to beſtow. Uſe well but all the *Might* thou haſt, and thou ſhalt find thy labour is not vain. Even the ſtrength of *Nature*, and of *common Grace*, are talents which thou muſt improve.

2. Art thou *willing* to uſe the *Might* thou haſt, and to *have more*, and *uſe it if thou hadſt it?* If thou *art*,

thou haſt then the ſtrength of Chriſt: Thou ſtandeſt not, and worketh not by thy own ſtrength: his promiſe is engaged to thee, and his ſtrength is ſufficient for thee. But if thou art not *willing*, thou art without excuſe; when thou hadſt heaven and hell ſet open in the Word of God to make thee *willing*, God will diſtinguiſh thy *wilfulneſs* from *unwilling weakneſs*.

3. There is more *Power* in all of you then you *uſe*, or then you are well aware of. It wanteth but *awakening* to bring it into act. Do you not find in your *Repentings*, that the change is more in *your Will* than in *your Power?* and in the *awaking* of your *Will* and *Reaſon* into *act*, than in the addition of meer *abilities?* and that therefore you befool your ſelves for your ſins and your neglects, and wonder that you had no more uſe of your underſtandings? Let but a ſtorm at Sea, or violent ſickneſs, or approaching death, rowſe up

up and waken the powers which you have, and you will finde there was much more asleep in you than you used.

I shall therefore next endeavour to awaken your abilities, or tell you how you should awaken them.

When your souls are drowsie, and you are forgetting your God, and your latter end, and the matters of Eternity have little force and savour with you; when you grow lazie and superficial, and Religion seems a lifeless thing; and you do your duty as if it were in vain, or against your wills; when you can lose your time, and delay repentance, and friends, and profit, and reputation, and pleasure can be heard against the Word of God, and take you off when you do all by the halves, and languish in your Christian course, as near to death; *Stir up your souls* with the *urgency* of such *Questions* as these.

Qu. 1. *Can I do no more than this for God?* Who gave me all? Who deſerveth all? Who ſeeth me in my duties and my ſins? When he puts me *purpoſely* on the triall, what I can do for his ſake and ſervice, Can *I do no more?* Can I love him no more? and obey, and watch, and work no more?

Qu. 2. *Can I do no more then this for Chriſt?* For him that did ſo much for me? that lived ſo exactly; obeyed ſo perfectly; walked ſo inoffenſively and meekly; deſpiſing all the *baits*, and *honours*, and *riches* of the world? that loved me to the death; and offereth me freely all his benefits, and would bring me to eternal Glory? Are theſe careleſs, cold and dull endeavours my beſt return for all this Mercy?

Qu. 3. *Can I do no more, when my ſalvation is the prize?* when Heaven or Hell depend much on it? when I know this before-hand, and may ſee in the glaſs of the holy Scriptures what

what is prepared for the *Diligent* and the *Negligent*, and what work there is and will be for ever in Heaven and Hell on theſe accounts? Could I not do more, if my houſe were on fire, or my eſtate, or life, or friend in danger, than I do for my ſalvation?

Qu. 4. *Can I do no more for the ſouls of men?* When they are undone for ever if they be not ſpeedily delivered? Is this my Love and compaſſion to my neighbour, my ſervant, friend or childe?

Qu. 5. *Can I do no more for the Church of God?* for the publick good? for the peace and welfare of the Nation and our poſterity? in ſuppreſſing ſin? in praying for deliverance? or in promoting works of publick benefit?

Qu. 6. *Can I do no more, that have loytered ſo long?* and go no faſter, that have ſlept till the evening of my days, when *Diligence* muſt be the diſcovery of my Repentance?

Qu. 7. *Can I do no more, that know not now but I am doing my last?* That see how fast my Time makes haste, and know I must be quickly gone? that know it must be *Now* or *Never*: and that this is all the time I shall have, on which an endless life dependeth?

Queſt. 8. *Can I do no better, when I know before hand, what different aſpects Diligence and Negligence will have, to the awakened ſoul in the review?* What a comfort it will be at death and judgement, to be able to ſay, I did my beſt, or loytered not away the time I had? And what a vexatious and heart-diſquieting thing it will then be to look back on Time as irrecoverably loſt, and on a life of tryal, as caſt away upon impertinencies, while the work that we lived for lay undone? ſhall I now by trifling prepare ſuch griping and tormenting thoughts, for my awakened conſcience?

Queſt. 9. *Can I do no more, when I am*

I am ſure I cannot do too much, and am ſure there is nothing elſe to be preferred? and that it's this I live for: and that life is for action; and diſpoſeth thereunto; (and holy life for holy action) and that it's better *not live*, than not attain the ends of living; when I have ſo many and unwearied enemies; when ſloth is my danger, and the advantage of my enemy; when I know that Reſolution and Vigorous diligence, is ſo neceſſary that all is loſt without it; will temptations be reſiſted, and ſelf denyed, and concupiſcence mortified, and fleſhly deſires tamed and ſubdued, and ſin caſt out, and a holy communion with heaven maintained with idleneſs and ſloth? will families be well ordered, and Church, or City, or Countrey well governed? will the careleſs ſinners that I am bound to help, be converted, and ſaved, with ſitting ſtill, and with ſome heartleſs cold endeavours?

Queſt. 10. *Can I do no more that have ſo much help?* that have mercies of all ſorts encouraging me, and creatures attending me; that have health to enable me, or affliction to remember and excite me; that have ſuch a maſter, ſuch a work, ſuch a reward, as better cannot be deſired; who is leſs excuſable for neglect than I?

Queſt. 11. *Could I do no more, if I were ſure, that my ſalvation lay on this one duty?* that according to *this prayer*, it ſhould go with me *for ever*; or if the ſoul of my *child*, or *ſervant*, or neighbour muſt ſpeed *for ever*, as my endeavours ſpeed with them now for their converſion? for ought I know it may be thus.

Queſt. 12. *Would I have God to come with the ſpur and rod?* How do I complain when affliction is upon me? And will I neither endure it, nor be quickened without it? Is it not better mend my pace and work, on eaſier terms?

I would

I would not have diſtreſſed ſouls to uſe theſe conſiderations meerly to *diſquiet* themſelves for their *infirmities*, and ſo live in *heavineſs* and *ſelf-vexation*, becauſe they cannot be as good as they deſire, or do as much and as well as they ſhould do: It is not deſpair that will mend the matter, but make it worſe: But I would wiſh the lazy ſloathful ſoul, to plead theſe Queſtions with it ſelf, and try whether they have no quickening power, if cloſely urged, and ſeriouſly conſidered.

Believe it Sirs, it is the *deceitfulneſs of proſperity* that keeps up the *reputation* of a *ſloathful life*, and makes *holy diligence* ſeem *unneceſſary*. When affliction comes, awakened reaſon is aſhamed of this, and ſeeth it as an odious thing.

BY this time you may ſee, what difference there is, between the judgement of *God*, and of the *world*; and

and what to think of the underſtandings of thoſe men (be they *high* or *low*, *learned* or *unlearned*) that hate or oppoſe this *holy diligence*. *God* bids us *love*, and *ſeek*, and *ſerve* him, with all our *heart*, and *ſoul*, and *might*: And theſe men call them *Zealots*, and *Preſicians*, and *Puritans*, that *endeavour* it; though, alas, they fall exceeding ſhort, when they have done their beſt. It is one of the moſt wonderful monſtroſities and deformities that ever befel the nature of man, that *men*, that *learned men*, that men that in other things are *wiſe*, ſhould *ſeriouſly* think that the utmoſt diligence to obey the Lord and ſave our ſouls, is *needleſs*; and that ever they ſhould take it for a *crime*, and make it a matter of *reproach*: That the *ſerious*, *diligent obeying of Gods Laws*, ſhould be the matter of the common diſdain and hatred of the world; that no men are more *generally abhorred*, and toſt up and down by impatient men; that great and

and ſmall, the Rulers and the vulgar rabble, in *moſt places* of the earth cannot endure them: To think how the *firſt man* that ever was born into the world, did *hate his own brother* till he had proceeded to murther him, becauſe he ſerved God better than himſelf, [*Becauſe his own works were evil, and his brothers righteous,*] 1 John 3. 12. And how *conſtantly* this horrid unnatural madneſs, hath ſucceeded and raged in the world from *Cain* until this day! It is not in vain that the Holy Ghoſt addeth, in the next words, 1 *John* 3. 13. [*Marvel not my brethren, if the world hate you*] implying that we are apt to *marvel at it*; as I confeſs I have *oft* and *greatly* done. Methinks, it is ſo wonderful a *plague* and *ſtain* in Nature, that it doth very much to confirm me of the truth of Scripture; of the Doctrine of mans fall, and original ſin, and the neceſſity of a Reconciler, and of renewing grace.

Diſtracted,

Distracted, miserable souls! Is it not enough for you to refuse your *own salvation*; but you must be angry with all that will not imitate you! Is it not mad enough, and bad enough to *choose* damnation, but you must be offended with all that are not of your mind! If *you* will not believe God, that without Regeneration, Conversion, holiness, and a heavenly, Spiritual life, there is no Salvation to be hoped for (*John* 3. 3, 5, 6. *Matth.* 18. 3. *Hebr.* 12. 14. *Rom.* 8. 9, 13. 2 *Cor.* 5. 17.) must *we all* be *unbelievers* with you? If you will laugh at hell till you are in it, must we do so too? If *God* and *glory* seem less worth to you, then your *fleshly pleasure for a time*, must *we* renounce our *Christianity*, and our *Reason* for fear of differing from *you?* If *you dare differ* from your *Maker*, and the *Redeemer*, and the *Holy Ghost*, and all the *Prophets*, *Apostles* and *Evangelists*, and all that ever came to Heaven, might not we be bold to differ from *you?*

If

If *you* will needs be ungodly, and chooſe your everlaſting wo, be patient with them that have more underſtanding, and dare not be ſo hardy, as to leap *after you* into the unquenchable fire: *Mock not at holineſs* if you have no mind of it. *Hinder not* them that *ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate*, if you refuſe your ſelves. Be not ſo deſirous of company in hell: It will prove no comfort to you, or abatement of your pain.

But becauſe you have the faces to contradict the God of truth, and to reproach that work which he commandeth, and to ſay, *What needs ſo much ado?* when he bids us *do it with all our might*; I will briefly tell you what you are doing, and ſhew you the ugly face of the ſcorner, and the filthy hearts of the enemies of holineſs, that if it may be, you may loath your ſelves.

1. *Theſe*

1. *These enmities of Holy diligence, deny God with their works and lives, and are practical Atheists*; and it seems are so near of kin to [*that wicked one,*] (see 1 *John* 3. 12) that they would have *all others* to do so too. And then how soon would *earth* be turned into *hell!* The case is plain: If *God* deserve not to be loved and served with all thy heart, and soul, and might, he is *not God.* And if thy wealth, or honor, or flesh, or friend deserveth more of thy love, and care, and diligence than God, then that is thy God that deserveth best. See now what these deriders of purity and obedience do think of God, and of the world.

2. *These Cainites do blaspheme the Governor of the world:* When *he* hath *given Laws* to the Creatures that he made of nothing, these wretches deride and hate men for obeying them. If *God* have not *commanded* that which you oppose, contradict it, and spare not: I would you were

were *much more* againſt that pretended Religion which *he commandeth not*. But if *he have commanded it*, and yet you *dare* revile them as too *Pure* and *Preciſe* that would obey it, what do you but charge the King of Saints with making Laws that are not to be obeyed? which muſt needs imply that they are *Fooliſh*, or *Bad*, though made by the *moſt Wiſe* and *Good*.

3. *Theſe Enemies of Holineſs oppoſe the practice of the very firſt principles of all Religion.* For *Heb.* 11.6. [*He that cometh to God, muſt believe that God is, and that he is the Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.*] And it's *diligent ſeeking him* that they hate and ſet themſelves againſt.

4. *Do not they judge Heaven to be leſs worth than Earth*; when they will do *leſs* for it, and would have others to do ſo too?

5. *They would have us all unchriſten and unman our ſelves*, as if there were *no life to come*; as if our *Reaſon* and all our *Faculties* were given us

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in vain. For if they are not given us for greater matters than all the honors and pleasures of the world, they are *in vain*, or *worse*; and the life of man is but a dream and misery. Were not a beast less miserable, if this were all?

6. *How base a price do these Gainers set on the immortal soul of man*, that think it not worth *so much ado*, as the careful obedience of the Laws of Christ? Nor worth so much as they do themselves for their filthy sins and perishing flesh? But would have us so mad as to sell heaven and our souls for a little sinful sloath and ease.

7. *These Enemies of holiness would have men take their Mercies for their Hurt, and their greatest blessings for a burthen or a plague, and to run into hell to be delivered from them.* Why man, dost thou know *what Holiness is?* and what it is to have access to God? I tell thee it is the *foretaste of heaven on earth.* It is the highest Glory, and sweetest delight, and chiefest

chiefeſt commodity to the ſoul. And art thou afraid of having *too much* of this? What, *thou that haſte none* (which ſhould make thee tremble) art thou afraid of having *too much?* Thou that never *feareſt too much money*, nor *too much honor*, nor *too much health*, art thou afraid of *too much ſpiritual health and holineſs?* What ſhall be thy *deſire*, if thou loath and fly from thy *felicity?*

8. You that are loyal ſubjects, take heed of theſe ungodly ſcorners: For by conſequence *they would tempt you to deſpiſe your King, and make a mock at the obeying of his Commands and Laws.* For if a man perſwade you to deſpiſe a *Judge*, he implieth that you may deſpiſe a *Conſtable.* No *King* is ſo great in compariſon of *God*, as a *fly* or *worm* is to *that King.* He therefore that would relax the Laws of *God*, and make it ſeem a *needleſs thing* to obey him *diligently* and *exactly*, implieth that obedience to any of the ſons of men is *much more needleſs.*

And

And you that are children or ſervants, take heed of the Doctrine of theſe men: *Maſters*, admit it not into your *families*. If he be worthy to be ſcorned as a *Puritan* or *Preciſian*, that is careful to pleaſe and obey the Lord, what ſcorn do your children and ſervants deſerve, if *they* will be obedient and pleaſing to *ſuch as you?*

9. All you that are poor Tradeſmen, take heed of the *conſequences of the Cainites ſcorns*, leſt it make you give over the labours of your calling, and turn your ſelves and families into beggery. For if *Heaven* be not worth your *greateſt labour*, your *bodies* are not worth the *leaſt*.

10. *Theſe Cainites ſpeak againſt the awakened Conſciences, and the confeſſions of all the world.* Whatſoever they may ſay in the dream of their blind preſumption and ſecurity, at laſt, when Death hath opened their eyes, they all cry, O that we had been Saints! O that we might die the death of the righteous, and that our laſt

laſt end might be as his! O that we had ſpent that Time, and Care, and Labour for our ſouls, which we ſpent on that which now is gall to our remembrance! And yet theſe men will take no warning, but now oppoſe and deride that courſe that all the world do wiſh at laſt they had been as zealous for as any.

11. *The enemy himſelf hath a conſcience within him*, that either grudgeth againſt his malicious impiety, and witneſſeth that he abuſeth them that are far better than himſelf; or at leaſt will ſhortly call him to a reckoning, and tell him better what he did, and make him change his face and tune, and wiſh himſelf in the caſe of thoſe that did oppoſe.

12. To conclude, the *Cainite is of that wicked one*, 1 John 3. 12. of *his father the Devil*, John 8. 42, 44. and is his walking, ſpeaking inſtrument on Earth, ſaying what he himſelf would ſay: He is the *open enemy of God*. For who are *his enemies*, but the *enemies of Holineſs*,

Holineſs, of *his Laws*, of our *Obedience*, of his *Image*, and of his *Saints*? And how will Chriſt deal at laſt with *his Enemies*? Luke 19. 27. O that they knew, that foreſeeing, they might eſcape! This is the *true*, the *ugly* picture of a *Cainite*, or *Enemy* of a *holy life*, that reproacheth *ſerious diligence* as a *preciſe* and *needleſs thing*, when God commandeth us, and Death, and the Grave, and Eternity admoniſh us to do his work with all our Might. Now conſider this ye that forget God, leſt he *tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you*, Pſal. 50. 22.

But of all the oppoſers of *ſerious Holineſs* in the world, there are none more unexcuſable and deplorably miſerable, than thoſe that profeſs themſelves *Miniſters of Chriſt*. Would one *believe* that had not known them, that there are ſuch men in the world? Alas, there are *too many*. Though Edu-

cation, and the Laws of the Land engage them to preach *true Doctrine*, yet are they *false Teachers* in the *Application*. For they never well learned the holy and heavenly doctrine which they preach, nor digested it, or received the power and impress of it upon their hearts; and therefore retaining their natural corruptions, impiety and enmity to the Life, and Power, and Practice of that Doctrine, they *indirectly* destroy what directly they would seem to build; and preach both for *God*, and *against him*; for *Christ* and the *Holy Spirit*, and *against them*; for *godliness*, and *against it*, both in the same Sermon. In *general*, they must needs speak for the word of God, and a holy life; But when they come to the *particulars*, they secretly reproach it, and condemn the *parts*, while they commend the whole. In *general* they speak well of religious, godly, holy people; but when they *meet* with them, they hate them, and make them *Precisi-*

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ans, a Sect that is *every where ſpoken againſt*, *peſtilent fellows*, *and movers of ſedition*, as the Apoſtles were accuſed, *Acts* 24. 5. & 28. 22. and any thing that malice can invent to make them odious: And what they *cannot prove*, they will *cloſely intimate*, in the *falſe application* of their Doctrines, deſcribing them ſo as may induce the hearers to believe that they are a company of ſelf-conceited Hypocrites, factious, proud, diſobedient, turbulent, peeviſh, affecting ſingularity, deſiring to ingroſs the reputation of Godlineſs to themſelves, but ſecretly as bad as others. And when they have thus repreſented them to the ignorant ſort of people, they have made the way of Godlineſs odious, and ſufficiently furniſhed miſerable ſouls with prejudice and diſlike; ſo that becauſe the *perſons* are thus made hateful to them, all ſerious diligence for Heaven, all tenderneſs of Conſcience, and fear of ſinning, all heavenly diſcourſe, and ſerious preaching,

preaching, reading, or praying, are alſo made odious for their ſakes: For hearing ſo ill of the *perſons*, and *ſeeing that theſe* are the *things* wherein they differ from others, they reduce their judgement of their *practices* to their forecaſtled judgement of the *perſons*. When their diligence in their families, in prayer and inſtructions, in reading, and fruitful improvement of the Lords day, or any other actions of ſtrictneſs and holy induſtry are mentioned, theſe ungodly Miniſters are ready to blot them with ſome open calumnies, or ſecret reproaches, or words of ſuſpicion, to vindicate their own unholy lives, and make people believe that ſerious piety is faction and hypocriſie. The black tincture of their minds, and the deſign and drift of their preaching may be perceived in the jeers, girds, and ſlanderous intimations againſt the moſt diligent ſervants of the Lord. The *controverted Truths* that ſuch maintain, they

preſent as *errors*: Their *unavoidable errors* they repreſent as *hereſie*: Their *duties* they repreſent as *faults*; and their *humane frailties* as enormous *crimes*: They feign them to be guilty of the things that never entered into their thoughts: And if *ſome* that have profeſſed Godlineſs, be guilty of greater crimes, they would make men believe that the reſt are ſuch, and that the family of Chriſt is to be judged of by a *Judas*, and the ſcope is to intimate that either their Profeſſion is *culpable*, or *needleſs*, and *leſs commendable*. *Regeneration* they would make to be but the entrance into the Church By Baptiſm, and any further Converſion, than the leaving off ſome groſs ſins, and taking up ſome heartleſs forms of duty, to be but a fancy or unneceſſary thing: And they would draw poor people to believe, that if they be born again Sacramentally of water, they may be ſaved, though they be not born again by the *renewing of the*

the Holy Spirit. Being ſtrangers themſelves to the myſterie of *Regeneration*, and to the life of Faith, and a heavenly Converſation, and to the loving and ſerving God with all their Soul and Might: They firſt endeavour to quiet themſelves with a belief that theſe are but fancies or unneceſſary; and then to deceive the people with that by which they have firſt deceived themſelves.

And it is worthy your obſervation, *what is it in Religion* that theſe Formal Hypocrites *are againſt*. There are ſcarce any words ſo ſound or holy, but they can bear them, if they be but deprived of their *Life*: Nor ſcarce any duty, if it be but *mortified*, but they can endure. But it is the *Spirit* and *Life* of all Religion which they cannot bear. As a *Body* differeth from a *Carkaſs*, not by the *parts*, but by the *Life*; ſo there is a certain *life* in preaching, and prayer, and all other acts of worſhip, which

is perceived by *several* sorts of hearers. The *Godly* perceive it to their *edification* and *delight*: For *here* it is that they are quickened and encouraged. *Life* begetteth *life*, as fire kindleth fire. The *ungodly* often perceive it to their vexation, if not to their conviction and conversion: This *Life* in preaching, praying, discipline, reproof, and conference, is it which biteth, and galleth, and disquieteth their consciences. And *this* they kick and rail against: *This* is the thing that will not let them sleep quietly in their sin and misery; but is calling and jogging them to awake, and will not let them sin in peace, but will either convert them or torment them before the Time. It is the *Life* of Religion that the Hypocrite *wants*; and the *Life* that he is *most against*. A *painted fire* burneth not. A *dead Lion* biteth not. The *Carkass* of an *Enemy* is not *formidable*. Let the *words* of that Sermon that *most offendeth them*, be separated from the *Life*, and

and put into a *Homily*, and *ſaid* or *read* in a *formal*, *drowſie*, or a *School-boys tone*, and they can *bear* it and *commend* it. Let the *ſame words* of prayer which now they like not, be *ſaid over* as a *life-leſs cuſtomary form*, and they can like it well. I ſpeak not againſt the *uſe of forms*, but the *abuſe* of them: Not againſt the *Body*, but the *Carkaſs*. Let *forms themſelves* be uſed by a ſpiritual ſerious man, in a *ſpiritual ſerious manner*, with the interpoſition of any quickening exhortations, or occaſional paſſages, that tend to keep them waken and attentive, and make them *feel* what you *mean* and *are about*, and you ſhall ſee they love not ſuch *animated forms*. It is the *Living Chriſtian*, and *Lively worſhip*, and *ſerious ſpiritual Religion*, which they hate: *kill* it and they can *bear* it. Let the *picture* of my *enemy* be nearer and comelier than his perſon was, and I can endure it in my bed-chamber, better than *himſelf* in the *meaneſt dreſs*. It is the *living Chriſtians*

that in all parts of the world are chiefly perſecuted. Let them be *once dead*, and *dead-hearted hypocrites* themſelves will honor them, eſpecially at a ſufficient diſtance: They will deſtroy the *living Saints*, and keep Holy days for the *dead* ones. *Wo to you Scribes and Phariſees hypocrites, becauſe ye build the Tombs of the Prophets, and garniſh the Sepulchres of the Righteous; and ſay, if we had been in the days of our Fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets: Wherefore ye be witneſſes unto your ſelves, that ye are the children of them which killed the Prophets: Fill ye up the meaſure of your Fathers: ye ſerpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye eſcape the damnation of hell!* Matth. 23. 29, 30, 31, 32, 33. The Dog that will not meddle with the *dead creature*, will purſue the *living*; and when he ſees it *ſtir no more*, will *leave it*. Chriſtianity without *ſeriouſneſs* is not *Chriſtianity*, and therefore not liable to the

the hatred of its enemies as ſuch. Say any thing and do any thing how ſtrict ſoever, if you will but act it as a Player on the ſtage, or do it coldly, ſlightly, and as if you were but in jeſt, you may have their approbation. But it is this *life*, and *ſeriouſneſs*, and worſhipping God in *Spirit* and *truth*, that convinceth them that *they themſelves are lifeleſs*, and therefore troubleth their deceitful peace, and therefore muſt not have their friendſhip. If it were the meer *bulk* of duty that they are weary of, how comes it to paſs that a *Papiſt* at his Pſalter, Beads, and Maſs-books, can ſpend more hours without much wearineſs or oppoſition, than we can do in ſerious worſhip? Turn all but into *words* and *beads*, and *canonical hours* and *days*, and *ſhews*, and *ceremony*, and you may be as religious as you will, and be *Righteous overmuch*, and few will hate, or reproach, or perſecute you *among them*, as too preciſe or ſtrict. But *living Chriſtians* and

worſhip, come among them like fire, that burneth them, and makes them ſmart, with a *word that is quick and powerful, ſharper than any two edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing of ſoul and ſpirit, joynts and marrow, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*, Heb. 4. 12.

And the *enmity* of the *Cainites* may teach the *Chriſtian*, what he ſhould be, and wherein his *excellency* lieth. It is *life* and *ſeriouſneſs* that your enemies hate: and therefore it is *life* and *ſeriouſneſs* that you muſt above all maintain; though dead-hearted hypocrites never ſo much oppoſe and contradict you.

O ſirs, they are no trifles, but the greateſt things that God hath ſet before you in his Word, and called you out to proſecute and poſſeſs: and your time of ſeeking them is ſhort; and therefore you have no time for trifles, nor any to loſe in idleneſs and ſloath. And of all men, Preachers ſhould be moſt ſenſible of this.

If *they were not* againſt ſerious holineſs in *others*, it is double wickedneſs for ſuch as they, to be *againſt it in themſelves*. It is great things that they have to ſtudy and to ſpeak of; and ſuch as call for the greateſt ſerioufneſs, and reverence and gravity in the ſpeaker, and condemn all trifling in *matter* or in manner. A man that is ſent of Chriſt to run for an immortal crown, or to direct others in ſuch a race, to ſave his own, or other mens ſouls, from endleſs miſery, ſhould be aſhamed to fill up his time with trifles, or to be ſlight and cold about ſuch great and weighty things. All the heart, and ſoul, and might, is little enough for matters of ſuch unſpeakable importance. When I hear Preachers or people ſpend their time in little impertinent fruitleſs things, that do but divert them from the great buſineſs of their lives, or to *daly* with the *greateſt matters*, rather than to uſe them and treat of them with a ſerioufneſs ſuitable to their importance;

I oft think of the words of *Seneca* the *serious Moralist*, as shaming the hypocrisie of such trifling Preachers and Professors of the Christian faith; [*Verba copiosa componis, & interrogans vincula nectis, & dicis, Acuta sunt ista! Nihil acutius aristâ; & in quo est utilis? Quædam inutilia, & inefficacia ipsa subtilitas reddit:*] that is, [*You compose copious words, and tye hard knots by curious questions; and you say, O these are acute things! What is more acute than the peal of corn? and yet what is it good for? subtility it self makes some things unprofitable and ineffectual.*]

[*Istæ ineptiæ Poetis relinquantur, quibus aures oblectare propositum est & dulcem fabulam nectere: sed qui ingenia sanare, & fidem in rebus humanis retinere, ac memoriam, officiorum animis ingerere volunt, serio loquantur, & magnis viribus rem agant*; that is, [*Leave these toys or fooleries to Poets, whose business is to delight the ear, and to compose a pleasant fable. But they that mean to heal mens understandings,*

ings, and retain credibility among men, and to bring into mens minds the remembrance of their duties, muſt ſpeak ſeriouſly, and do their buſineſs with all their might.]

Demens omnibus merito videret —— *He would juſtly by all be taken for a mad man, that when the town expecteth to be ſtormed by the enemies, and others are buſie at work for their defence, will ſit idle, propoſing ſome curious queſtions*] —— *Nunquid tibi demens videtur, ſi iſtis impendero operam, & nunc obſideor? quid agam? mors me ſequitur; vita fugit; Adverſus hæc me doce aliquid: effice ut ego mortem non timeam, & vita me non effugiat.*] [*And ſhall not I be taken for a mad man, If I ſhould buſie my ſelf about ſuch things that am now beſieged? what ſhall I do? death purſueth me: life flyeth from me: teach me ſomething againſt theſe; make death not dreadfull to me, or life not to fly from me.*] *Si multum eſſet ætatis, parce diſpenſandum erit, ut ſufficeret neceſſariis:*

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nunc quæ dementia eſt, ſupervacua diſcere in tanta temporis egeſtate !] [*If we had much time, we ſhould ſparingly lay it out, that it might ſuffice for neceſſary things : But now what a madneſs is it, to learn things needleſs or ſuperfluous in ſo great a ſcarcity of time ?*] [*Metire ergo ætatem tuam : tam multa non capit. Meaſure thy age : It's not enough for ſo many things.*] [*Relinque iſtum ludum literarum Philoſophis. Rem magnificam ! ad ſyllabas vocant qui animum minuta diſcendo diminuunt & conterunt, & id agunt, ut Philoſophia potius difficilis quam magna videatur : Socrates, qui totam Philoſophiam revocavit ad mores, hanc ſummam dixit eſſe ſapientiam, bona malaque diſtinguere.*] [*Leave this learned play to Philoſophers : A gallant buſineſs ! They call us to ſyllables ; and debaſe, and depreſs the mind by learning ſuch little trivial things, and make Philoſophy rather to ſeem a matter of difficulty than great.* Socrates, *that revoked all Philoſophy to manners, did call this*

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the highest wisdom, to distinguish good and evil.]

Did a *Seneca* see by the light of nature, so much of the necessity of *seriousness* and *diligence*, about the *matters of the soul?* and so much of the madness of spending *words* and *time* on *trifles?* And yet shall there be found a man among *professed Christians*, and among the *Preachers of Faith and Holiness*, that plead for *trifling*, and scorn at *seriousness*, and count them *moderate* and *wise* that a *Heathen* brands as *toyish* and *distracted?*

What is it that *clouderh* the *glory of Christianity*, and keepeth so great a part of the world in Heathenism and Infidelity: but this, that *among Christians* there are so *few* that are *Christians indeed?* and those few are so obscured by the multitude of *formal trifling hypocrites*, that *Christianity* is *measured* and *judged* of by the *lives of those that are no Christians? Religion* is a thing to be *demonstrated* and *honoured* and *commended* by

practice

practice: *words alone* are ineffectual to repreſent its excellency to ſo *blind* a world, that muſt know by *feeling*, having loſt their *ſight*. In our *profeſſed faith* we mount unto the Heavens, and leave poor unbelievers wallowing in the dirt. O what a tranſcendent, unconceivable glory, do we profeſs to expect with God unto eternity! And what manner of perſons ſhould they be, in all holy converſation and godlineſs, that look for ſuch a life as this? How baſely ſhould they eſteem thoſe tranſitory things, that are the food and felicity of the ſenſual world? How patiently ſhould they undergo contempt and ſcorn, and whatſoever man can inflict upon them? How ſtudiouſly ſhould they devote and referr all their time, and ſtrength, and wealth, and intereſt, to this their glorious bleſſed end? How ſeriouſly ſhould they ſpeak of, and how induſtriouſly ſhould they ſeek, ſuch ſure, ſuch near, ſuch endleſs joyes? Did profeſſed Chriſtians

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more exactly conform their hearts and lives to their profeſſion and holy rule, their *lives* would confute the reproaches of their enemies, and command a reverent and awfull eſtimation from the obſervers, and do more to convince the unbelieving world of the truth and dignity of the Chriſtian faith, than all the words of the moſt ſubtile diſputants. *Chriſtianity* being an *affecting practical ſcience*, muſt *practically* and *affectionately* be declared, according to its *nature*: *Arguments* do but paint it out: And *pictures* do no more make known its excellency, than the *picture* of *meat* and *drink* makes known its *ſweetneſs*. When a *doctrine ſo holy*, is *viſibly exemplified*, and liveth, and *walketh*, and *worketh* in *ſerious Chriſtians* before the world: Either *this* or *nothing* will convince them and conſtrain them, to glorifie our Lord, and ſay, that *God is among us or in us of a truth*, Matth. 5. 16. 1 Cor. 14. 25. But it is *unchriſtian lives* that darkeneth the glory

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of the *Chriſtian faith*. When men that profeſs ſuch glorious hopes, ſhall be as ſordidly earthly, and ſenſual, and ambitious, and impotent, and impatient as other men, they ſeem but fantaſtical diſſemblers.

And yet ſhall there be found ſuch a perfidious wretch under the heavens of God, as a *profeſſed Miniſter of Chriſt*, that ſhall *ſubtilly* or *openly* labour to make an exact, and holy, and heavenly converſation a matter of *reproach* and *ſcorn*, and that under pretence of reproving the ſins of *Hypocrites* and *Schiſmaticks*, ſhall make the exacteſt conformity to the Chriſtian rule, and faithfulleſt obedience to the Almighty Soveraign, to ſeem to be but hypocriſie or ſelf-conceitedneſs, or needleſs trouble, if not the way of ſedition, and publick trouble, and turning all things upſide down? that cannot reprove ſin, without malicious inſinuating ſlanders or ſuſpitions againſt the holy Law, and holy life, that are moſt con-

contrary to ſin, as life to death, as health to ſickneſs, and as light to darkneſs?

For *any man*, eſpecially *any profeſſed Chriſtian*, *any where* to oppoſe or ſcorn at godlineſs, is a dreadfull ſign, as well as a heinous ſin: But for a *Preacher of Godlineſs* to oppoſe and ſcorn at *Godlineſs*, and that in the *Pulpit*, while he pretendeth to promote it, and plead for it in the name of Chriſt, is a ſin that ſhould ſtrike the heart of man with horrour to conceive of.

Though I cannot ſubſcribe my ſelf to that paſſage in the ſecond part of the tenth Homily, *Tom.* 2. page 150. (however I very much love and honour the Book of Homilies) yet for their ſakes that not only can ſubſcribe to it, but would have all kept out of the Miniſtry that cannot, and that take it for that Doctrine of the Church of *England* which they will believe and Preach, I will recite it to the terror of the guilty,

guilty, not to drive to deſpair, but to awake them or to ſhame them for their oppoſition to the wayes of godlineſs.

Expounding *Pſal.* 1. 1. *Bleſſed is the man that hath not walked after the counſel of the ungodly, nor ſtood in the way of ſinners, nor ſit in the ſeat of the ſcornfull*] having ſhewed who are the [*ungodly*] and [*the ſinners*] it addeth theſe words.

" [*The third ſort he calleth ſcorners*; " that is, a ſort of men whoſe hearts " are ſo ſtuffed with malice, that they " are not contented to dwell in ſin, " and to lead their lives in all kind of " wickedneſs, but alſo they do con- " temn and ſcorn in others all god- " lineſs, true Religion, all hone- " ſty and vertue. Of the two firſt " ſorts of men, I will not ſay, but " they may take Repentance, and be " converted unto God. Of the third " ſort, I think I may without danger " of Gods judgement pronounce, that " never any yet were converted unto " God

" God by Repentance, but continued " ſtill in their abominable wickedneſs, " heaping up to themſelves damnati- " on againſt the day of Gods inevi- " table judgement.

Though I dare not ſay, but *ſome* ſuch have Repented, yet let the ſcorners that believe this, remember, that they ſubſcribe the ſentence of their own condemnation.

Though I look upon this ſort of the enemies of Holineſs as thoſe that are as unlikely to be recovered and ſaved, as almoſt any people in the world, except *Apoſtates* and *Malicious Blaſphemers* of the *Holy Ghoſt*; yet in compaſſion to the people and themſelves, I ſhall plead the cauſe of God with their conſciences, and try what Light can do with their underſtandings, and the terrours of the Lord with their hardened hearts.

1. *A Preacher of the Goſpel ſhould much excell the people in underſtanding:* And therefore this ſin is *greater* in them than other men: what *means*, what

what *light* do *they* ſin againſt? Either thou *knoweſt* the *Neceſſity* of *ſtriving* for ſalvation with the greateſt diligence, or thou *doſt not*. If not, what a ſin and ſhame is it to undertake the ſacred Office of the Miniſtry, while thou knoweſt not the things that are *neceſſary to ſalvation*, and that which every *Infant in the faith* doth know? But if thou *doſt know it*, how doſt thou make ſhift maliciouſly to oppoſe it, without feeling the beginnings of Hell upon thy Conſcience? When it is thy *work* to *read the Scriptures*, and meditate on them, doſt thou not read thy doom, and meditate terrour? How canſt thou chooſe but perceive that the ſcope of the Word of God is contrary to the bent of thy affections and ſuggeſtions? Yea what is more evident by the *Light of Nature*, than that God and our ſalvation cannot be regarded with too much holy ſerioufneſs, exactneſs and induſtry? Should not the *beſt things be beſt loved?*

loved? and the *greateſt matters* have our *greateſt care?* And is there any thing to be compared with God and our eternal ſtate? O what *overwhelming* ſubjects are theſe to a ſober and conſiderate *mind*! what toys are all things in compariſon of them! And yet doſt thou *make light* of them, and alſo *teach men ſo to do*! As if there were ſomething elſe that better deſerved mens greateſt care and diligence than they. What, a *Preacher*, and not a *Believer*! Or a *Believer*, and yet not ſee enough in the matters of *Eternity* to engage all our powers of ſoul and body againſt all the world that ſhould ſtand in competition?

2. *Is it not ſinfull and terrible enough, to be thy ſelf in a carnal unrenewed ſtate!* (Rom. 1. 13.) and to be without the Spirit and life of Chriſt (*v.* 9.) but thou muſt be ſo cruel as to *make others* miſerable alſo? *Pſal.* 50. 16, 17. [*But to the wicked ſaith God, What haſt thou to do to declare my ſtatutes?*

or

or that thou ſhouldeſt take my Covenant in thy mouth, ſeeing thou hateſt inſtruction, and caſteſt my words behind thee?] Matth. 5. 19. *Whoſoever ſhall break one of theſe leaſt Commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven: But whoſoever ſhall do and teach the ſame, ſhall be called Great in the Kingdom of Heaven.*]

3. What an aggravation is it of thy impiety and ſoul-murder, that *thou art bound by Office to teach men that life of holineſs which thou oppoſeſt*, and to perſwade them to that with all thy Might, which thou endeavoureſt cloſely and cunningly to diſgrace! And wilt thou be a *traytor* to Chriſt in the name of a *Meſſenger* and Preacher of the Goſpel? Wilt thou engage thy ſelf to promote his intereſt, and to uſe all thy skill and power to build men up in holineſs and obedience; and when thou haſt done this, wilt thou diſgrace and hinder it? Doſt thou take on thee to go on

the

the meſſage of Chriſt, and then ſpeak againſt him? We do not find that *Judas* dealt thus with him: when he ſent him as he did other Preachers, we read not that he preacht againſt him. O let not my ſoul be numbred with ſuch men in the day of the Lord! It will be eaſier for *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, than for the *refuſers* of the Word and Grace of Chriſt. What then will be the doom of the *oppoſers*? And above all of *thoſe treacherous oppoſers*, that pretend themſelves to propagate and promote them.

If the wit and malice of Satans inſtruments were ſharpened againſt the ways and ſervants of the Lord, it belongs *to you* to *plead Chriſts cauſe*, and ſhame theſe abſurd unreaſonable gain-ſayers, and ſtop the mouth of impious contradiction: And will *you joyn* with the gain-ſayers, and ſecretly or openly ſay as they? Who ſhould *confound* the *deriders* of a holy life but you? Who ſhould lay

open the excellencies of Christ, the glory of heaven, the terrors of the Lord, and all other obligations to the most serious Religiousness, but *you* that have undertaken it as your calling and employment? If any man in the Parish were so Atheistical and brutish, as to think God unworthy of our dearest Love, our most exact obedience, and most laborious service, who should display this Atheists folly, but you that are doubly (as Christians, and Ministers) obliged to defend the honor of your Lord? If any of the *people* should fall into such a dream or dotage, as to question the Necessity of our utmost diligence in our preparations for eternal life, who should awake them by lifting up their voices as a trumpet, and help to recover their understandings, but *you* that are the watchmen, and know their blood will be required at your hands, if you give them not loud and timely warning? If any subtil malicious servant of the

the Devil, ſhould plead againſt the neceſſity of Holineſs, and diſſwade the people from ſerving God with all their might, who ſhould be ready to confirm the weak, and ſtrengthen and encourage them that are thus aſſaulted, and help to keep up their zeal and forwardneſs, but you that are *Leaders* in the *Army* of the Lord? Is it not a *holy God* that you are engaged to ſerve? And a *holy Church* in which you have your ſtation? And a *Communion of Saints* in which you have undertaken to adminiſter the *holy things of God?* Have you not read what was done to *Nadab* and *Abihu*, when *Moſes* told *Aaron*, [*This is it that the Lord ſpake, ſaying, I will be ſanctified in them that come nigh me, and before the people I will be glorified,*] Lev. 10. 3. Is it not a *holy Law and Goſpel* which you publiſh? You have undertaken to warn the ſloathful, the ſenſual, the worldly, and the prophane, *that they ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, and ſeek firſt the king-*

dom of God and his Righteousness, Luk. 13. 24. Matth. 6. 33. *and to give diligence to make sure their calling and election*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. *and to give all diligence in adding vertue to their faith, &c.* 2 Pet. 1. 5. *and with all diligence to keep their hearts*, Prov. 4. 23. And are *you* the men that would *quench* their zeal, and *destroy* the *holy diligence* which you should *preach?* The Lord touch your hearts, and recover you in time, or how woful will it be with such *hardened Hypocrites*, that in the *Light*, and *in his family and livery*, and under his standard and colours dare prove Traytors and Enemies to the Lord?

4. And what an addition is it to your guilt, that *you speak against God in his own name?* By *Office* you are to deliver his *message*, and speak to the people *in his name*, and *in his stead*, 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20. And dare you before the Sun, and under the Heavens of God, and in his hearing, perswade men that the *most holy God is against Holiness?*

Holineſs? and the *King of Saints* is an *adverſary to ſanctity?* and that he that *made* his *holy Law*, is againſt the *moſt exact obeying* of it? Dare you prefix a [*Thus ſaith the Lord,*] to ſo impious a ſpeech as [*It is in vain to ſerve the Lord? what needs there ſo much ado for your ſalvation?* Dare you go to men as from the Lord, and ſay [*You are too careful and diligent in his ſervice! Leſs ado may ſerve the turn! What need this fervour, and redeeming time! This is but Puritaniſm or Preciſeneſs. Its better to do as the moſt, and venture your ſouls without ſo much ado.*] *Who* could at laſt hold up his face, or ſtand before the dreadful Tribunal, that ſhould be found in the guilt of ſuch a crime! What, to put *God* into the ſimilitude of *Satan*, and deſcribe the *moſt Holy* as the *enemy of Holineſs!* and make him plead *againſt himſelf*, and diſgrace his own Image, and *diſſwade* men from that which *he himſelf* hath made of *neceſſity* to their ſalvation! What viler blaſphemy can be uttered!

5. And it aggravateth your ſin, that your *Relation obligeth you to the moſt tender affections to your people:* And yet that *you* ſhould ſeduce them to *damnation.* For the *Nurſe to poyſon them*; for the *Parents* to cut the *childrens throats*, is worſe than for an *enemy* to do it. If the *Devil* our profeſſed enemy ſhould himſelf appear to us, and ſay, *Prepare not ſo ſeriouſly for death: Be not ſo ſtrict, and diligent, and holy,*] it were not, in many reſpects, *ſo bad*, as for *you* to do it, that ſhould help to ſave us from his ſnares. You that profeſs your ſelves their Fathers! that ſhould travel in birth till Chriſt be formed in your peoples hearts! that ſhould love your people as your own bowels, and tender the weak, and pity the wicked, and ſtick at no labour, ſuffering or coſt, that might advance their holineſs, and further their ſalvation; For *you* to tempt men into a *careleſs life*, and turn them out of the holy way, is an

an aggravated cruelty. It's worſe for the Shepherd to deſtroy us than the Wolf. Read *Ezekiel* 34. & 33.

6. *Are you not aſhamed thus to contradict your ſelves?* What can you find to *preach* from the *word of God*, that tendeth not to this *holy diligence* which you are againſt? How can you make ſhift to preach an hour, and not acquaint men with the *Duty* and *Neceſſity* of *ſeeking God with all their Might?* Do you not tell them, that *except they be converted and new born, they ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of God*, John 3. 3,5. Mat. 18. 2. And *that without holineſs none ſhall ſee the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. And *that if they live after the fleſh, they ſhall die*, Rom. 8. 13. And *that except their righteouſneſs exceed the righteouſneſs of Scribes and Phariſees, they ſhall in no caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 5. 20. And will you in your *Application*, or *private diſcourſes unſay* all this again, and give God and

your ſelves the *lye?* And let people ſee, that the Pulpit is to you but as a Stage, and that you believe not what you ſpeak?

7. Conſider, that your *place and calling, maketh you the moſt ſucceſsful ſervants of the Devil*, and ſo the moſt bloody murtherers of ſouls, while *you* give your judgement againſt a ſtrict and heavenly life. For *a drunkard in an Alehouſe* to mock the Miniſter, and rail at ſerious Religion, is leſs regarded by ſober men, and ſmall advantage to his maſters cauſe; nay the wickedneſs of his life, is ſo great a ſhame to his judgement, that it inclineth many to think well of thoſe that *he* ſpeaks againſt. But when a man that pretendeth to *learning* and *underſtanding*, and to be himſelf a *Paſtor* of the Church, and *Preacher* of the myſteries of Chriſt, ſhall make them odious that are moſt careful for their ſouls, and moſt exact in pleaſing God, and ſhall make all *ſerious diligence* for heaven to

ſeem

ſeem but *intemperate zeal* and *ſelf-conceitedneſs*: and ſhall deſcribe a Saint as if the formal lifeleſs Hypocrite, that giveth God but the leavings of the world, and never ſet his heart on heaven, were indeed the man: what a ſnare is here for the perdition of the ignorant! They, they are naturally averſe from holineſs, and are eaſily perſwaded to think that to be unneceſſary or bad, which ſeems ſo much above them and againſt them, will be much confirmed in their miſtakes and miſery, when they hear their *Teachers* ſpeak *without them*, the ſame that *Satan* by his ſuggeſtions doth *within them*. This turneth a *trembling ſinner*, into a *hardned ſcorner*: he that before went under the daily correction of his conſcience, for neglecting God, and omitting holy duties, and living to the fleſh, grows bold and fearleſs, when he hears the *Preacher* diſgrace the ſtricter, purer way. By that time he hath heard a while the *fear of God* derided as *preciſe-*

neſs, and a tender conſcience reproached as a *ſcrupulous fooliſh thing*, his conſcience grows more pliable to his luſts, and hath little more to ſay againſt them. When Gods own profeſſed Miniſters that ſhould be wiſer and better than the people, are *againſt this zeal* and induſtry for heaven, the people will ſoon think, that at leaſt it is *tolerable* in them: And they will ſooner learn to *deride a Saint* from a *Sermon*, or diſcourſe of a *Preacher* or *a learned man*, than from the *ſcorns* or *talk* of *hundreds* of the *ignorant*. And wilt thou *teach* them to *hate godlineſs*, who haſt undertaken before the righteous God, to *teach* them to *practiſe* it? He that *diſpraiſeth* it, though under other names, and repreſenteth it as odious, though masked with the title of ſome odious vice, doth indeed endeavour to make men *hate* it. And what a terrible account wilt thou have to make, when the ſeduction and tranſgreſſion of all theſe ſinners ſhall be charged

charged upon thee? When Christ shall say to the haters, deriders and opposers of his holy ways and servants [*In as much as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did unto me.*] How durst you scorn the image of your Maker? and hate the *Saints* whose *Communion* you professed to *believe*; and deride or oppose that *serious holiness*, without which you had no hope of being saved? If then the sinners become your accusers, and say, [*Lord we thought it had been but unnecessary preciseness, and that serious Christians had been but self-conceited factious hypocrites, and that lip-service with a common worldly life might have served the turn; We heard our Preachers represent such strict and zealous men, as turbulent, seditious, and refractory, as odious and not as imitable: Their application was against them: Their discourse derided them: Of them we learnt it, We thought they were wiser and better than we: Of whom should we learn but*

of

of our Teachers!] Wo to the Teachers that ever they were born, that muſt be then found guilty of this crime.

If *Adam*'s excuſe was *Eve*'s accuſation, [*The woman which thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the tree and I did eat*] And the *womans* excuſe did charge the Serpent [*The Serpent beguiled me and I did eat,*] Gen. 3. 12, 13. (though it freed not the excuſers,) How will it load *you*, when your people ſhall ſay, [*The Teachers that we thought thou gaveſt us, did teach us and go before us in ſetting againſt this holy diligence; and we did but learn of them, and follow them!*

8. *Are not the people backward enough to the ſerving of God with all their might, unleſs you hinder them?* Is not the corrupted heart of lapſed man *averſe enough* to the matters of ſalvation, but you muſt make them worſe? If you had to do with the beſt and holieſt perſon in the

the world, that walketh with God in the moſt heavenly converſation, he would tell you that his dull and backward heart hath no need of *cloggs*, and pull-backs, and diſcouragements, but of all the help that can be afforded him, to quicken him up to greater diligence. The *moſt zealous* lament that they are *ſo cold*: The *moſt heavenly* lament that they are *ſo earthly*, and ſo *ſtrange to heaven*: The moſt *laborious* lament that they are ſo *ſloathfull*; and the *fruitfulleſt* Believers that they are ſo *unprofitable*; and thoſe that are moſt *watchfull* of their words and deeds, that they are ſo *careleſs*; and thoſe that moſt diligently redeem their time, lament it that they loſe ſo much; and thoſe that walk moſt *accurately* and *exactly*, that they are ſo *looſe*, and keep no cloſer to the Rule. And yet dareſt thou increaſe the backwardneſs of the *ungodly*! will not their *carnal intereſts and luſts* ſerve turn to keep them from a *holy life*! Is not *Satan* ſtrong enough

of

of himſelf? will not the *common diſtaſte* of *Godlineſs* in the world, ſufficiently prejudice and avert them without *thy helps?* Do you ſee your people ſo *forward to do too much* for Heaven, that you muſt pull them back? Cannot ſouls be *damned* without your *furtherance?* or is it a *deſireable work?* and will it *pay* you for your coſt and labour? The way is up-hill; The beſt of us are weak, and frequently ready to ſit down! A thouſand impediments are caſt before us by Satan and the world, to make us linger till the time be paſt; and many a charm of pleaſure and diverſion to make us ſleep till the door be ſhut. And *Miniſters* are ſent to keep us *waking*, and take us by the hand, and lead us on, and remove impediments: and ſhall they ſet in with the enemy, and be our chiefeſt hinderers? O treacherous guides! O miſerable helps! Are not our dark underſtandings, our earthly, dull and backward hearts, our paſſions

paſſions and troubled affections, our appetites and ſenſual inclinations, our natural ſtrangeneſs and averſeneſs to God, and Heaven, and holineſs, enough to hinder us *without you?* Are not all the temptations of the Devil, the allurements of the fleſh, and world, the impediments of poverty and riches, of flattery and of frowns, of friends and foes, in our callings and in our divertiſements, are not *all theſe* enough to cool and dull us, and keep us from ſerving God *too much*, and being *too carefull* and *diligent* for our ſouls, but *Preachers* themſelves muſt be our *impediments and ſnares?* Now the Lord deliver our ſouls from ſuch impediments, and his Church from ſuch unhappy guides!

9. *Conſider whom thou imitateſt in this.* Is it Chriſt, or Satan? Chriſt calleth men to *ſtrive*, to *labour*, to *ſeek firſt*, to *watch*, to *pray always*, and *not wax faint*, Luk. 12. 24. John 6. 27. Mat. 6, 33. & 25. 13.

Luke

Luke 18. 1. The Apostles call men to be [*fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works; to pray continually; to be a chosen generation, a Royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar people to shew forth the praises of him that hath called us, and offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. 2. 5. 9. 1 Thess. 5. 17. Tit. 2. 14. Rom. 12. 11. *To fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold upon eternal life*, 1 Tim. 6. 12. *To serve God acceptably (being as a consuming fire) with reverence and godly fear*, Heb. 12. 28, 29. *To be steadfast, unmoveable, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15. 58.] And dare *you gainsay* the Lord and his Apostles, and concurr with *Satan*, and the *Pharisees and enemies* of Christ?

10. *You do your worst to make the sacred office of the Ministry to become contemptible*, as *Eli*'s Sons did: Poor people

people that cannot ſufficiently diſtinguiſh the *Doctrine* from the *Application*, the *office* from the *perſon*, the *uſe* from the *abuſe*, will be tempted to run from the ordinances of God, and think the worſe of *others* for *your ſakes*, and ſuſpect *all their food*, becauſe *you* mix ſuch poyſon in it. And the more Holy and Neceſſary the office and work is, the greater is your ſin in corrupting it, or making it ſuſpected or abhorr'd.

Conſider ſoberly of theſe things, and then go on and ſpeak againſt a *Life of Holy diligence* if you *dare*.

I know you'l ſay, *It is not Godlineſs, but ſingularity or humour, or diſobedience, or hypocriſie, or faction that you oppoſe:* and perhaps you'l inſtance in ſome that are guilty of ſome of theſe, or ſeem ſo at the leaſt.

But 1. I do here ſolemnly profeſs that I hate theſe crimes as well as you: and that it is not any part of my intention to plead for *intemperance*, *diſobedience in lawfull things*, for

for *ſchiſms*, or *faction* or any *irregularity*: And this I here put in againſt thoſe that are diſpoſed to miſunderſtand and miſreport us, and leave it as *on record* to prove them ſlanderers, that ſhall accuſe me of defending *any ſuch thing*. And I do proteſt againſt thoſe on the other ſide, that will fetch encouragement for any tranſgreſſion from my neceſſary plea for the *holy induſtry* and *vigilancy* of Believers. And moreover, I do profeſs that it *is only the oppoſers of Holineſs that I mean in this Defence*, and *have not the leaſt intent to intimate that any others are guilty of that crime that are not*. But having premiſed this proteſtation, to prevent miſtakes and falſe reports, I anſwer now to the guilty.

2. If it be *crimes* only that you are againſt, deliver your ſelf ſo, as may not lay reproach or ſuſpicion *on Godlineſs*, which is *moſt oppoſite* to *all crimes*. Cannot you preach againſt *Diviſions*, *diſobedience*, or any other

other *ſin*, without any ſcornfull intimations or reflections againſt mens *diligent ſerving of the Lord.*

3. Why do not you *commend thoſe* that are *not liable* to your accuſations, and encourage them in *holineſs*, and draw others to imitate them? And why do you not commend the *Good* where you diſcommend the *evil* that is commixt.

4. Shall *Health* and *Life* be made a ſcorn, becauſe there are few but have ſome *diſtemper* or *diſeaſe?* Shall *Chriſtianity* and *Holineſs* be ſecretly reproached, becauſe *all Chriſtians* have *ſome* fault to be accuſed of? If men be faulty, you ſhould perſwade them to be *more ſtrict* and *diligent*, and not *leſs:* It is for *want* of watchfulneſs and ſtrictneſs that they *ſin*. Nothing is more contrary to their *faults*, than *Holineſs*. There is no other way for their full reformation. And therefore all true humbled Chriſtians are ready to confeſs their *faultineſs* themſelves; but ſo far are they from thinking

thinking the worſe of *piety* for it, that it's one great reaſon that moveth them to go on, and to read, and hear, and pray, and meditate, and do ſo much that they may get more ſtrength againſt their *faults*. Muſt they think ill of *food*, and *phyſick*, and *exerciſe*, becauſe they are *infirm*? *All* faithful Miniſters tell their people plainly of their *ſins* (ſo far as they are acquainted with them) as well as you: But they do it not in a way reproachfull to their holy diligence: They do not therefore call them off from *Godlineſs*, nor tempt them to be leſs in the uſe of means, but *more*, by how much their need is greater. A *holy heart*, and a *malignant heart*, will ſhew their difference in the reproving of the *ſame fault*. The one layeth all the *odium* on the *vice*, and honoureth the *holy obedience* of the Saints. The other faſteneth his ſting upon the *Godly*, and under pretence of diſhonouring their *faults*, doth ſeek to faſten the diſhonour on their *holineſs*. And thoſe that

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are ſo *minded*, will never want *occaſion* or *pretence*, for the worſt that Satan would have them ſay. The Church will never be without *ſome hypocrites*, and *ſcandals*, nor the *beſt* without *ſome faults* and *paſſions*; nor the *holieſt* action without ſome mixture of *humane frailty* and infirmity; nor will the very *goodneſs* and *holineſs* of the action, be free from plauſible calumnies and ſcorns, while there is the *wit* and *venom* of the Serpent in the *heads* and *hearts* of wicked men.

How eaſie is it to put a name of ignominy upon every perſon, and every duty? To charge any man with Hypocriſie, or Pride? To take the wiſeſt man for *ſelf-conceited*, becauſe he is not of the accuſers mind? To call our *obedience to God*, by the name of *diſobedience unto man*, when man forbids it, as they uſed the three witneſſes *Dan.* 3. and *Daniel* himſelf for praying in his houſe, *Dan.* 6. though they confeſſed they had *nothing elſe againſt him*? To call *Gods Truth* by

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the name of *Hæreſie*, and *Hereſie* by the name of *Truth*? To charge all with *Schiſm* that dare not ſubject their ſouls to the uſurpation and arrogant impoſitions of the ſons of Pride, that have neither Authority nor Ability to Govern us, as the Papiſts deal by the greateſt part of the Chriſtian world? To *lay ſnares* for mens Conſciences, and then accuſe them for *falling into thoſe* ſnares? To make *new Articles of faith*, till they have tranſcended the capacity of *Divine* and *Rational belief*, and then *condemn us* for not believing them? To make *Laws* for the Church. *unneceſſary* in their own opinion, and ſinfull in other mens, and command things which they know that others think the Lord forbids, and then load them with the ſufferings and reproaches of the *diſobedient*, *turbulent*, *heretical*, *ſchiſmatical*, or *ſeditious*? To call men *factious*, if they will not be *of their faction*? and *Sectaries*, if they will not unreaſonably ſub-

ject

ject their *ſouls to them*, and joyn with an *imperious Sect* againſt the *Catholick Unity* and *Simplicity?* All which the *Romaniſts* practiſe upon the Church of Chriſt. How *eaſie*, but how *unreaſonable*, and yet how *unreſiſtible* is all this?. How eaſie is it to call a *meeting of ſober Chriſtians*, *for prayer and mutual edification*, ſuch as that was, *Acts* 12. 12. by the name of a *factious ſchiſmatical Conventicle*, and a meeting of *Drunkards*, or *Gameſters*, by a more gentle, leſs diſgraceful name? To ſay a man becomes a *Preacher*, when he modeſtly reproveth another for his ſins, or charitably exhorteth him in order to his ſalvation, or giveth any neceſſary plain inſtruction to his *family*, for whom he muſt give account? Believe it, it will be a poor excuſe to any man, that becomes an enemy to the diligence of a Saint, that he could *thus cloak his malice*, and *cloath a Saint* with the *vizor* of an *Hypocrite*, and the rags of any *odious Sect*.

If

If the *Phariſees* were to be believed, it was *not they*, but *Chriſt* that was the *Hypocrite*: nor was it the *Son of God*, but an *Enemy to Cæſar*, and a *Blaſphemer* that they *put to death*. But will not Chriſt *know his ſheep*, though he find them *torn* in a *wolfs skin*? You ſay it is *turbulent Preciſians* that you ſtrike; but what if Chriſt find but *one of the leaſt of his Brethren bleeding* by it? It is but *Hypocrites* or *Schiſmaticks* that you *reproach*; but if Chriſt find an *humble ſerious Chriſtian ſuffering* by your abuſe, and you to anſwer it, I would not be in your coats for all the greatneſs and honour that you ſhall have before your everlatting ſhame. If *Tertullus* accuſe a *peſtilent fellow, and a mover of ſedition*, and Chriſt find an *holy laborious Apoſtle in bonds and ſuffering by it*, it is not his *names* that will excuſe him, and make an *Apoſtle*, or *perſecution* to be another thing.

To

TO return to the *endangered flocks*: Look upward sirs, and think whether *Heaven* be worth your labour! Look downwards, and think whether *Earth be more worthy* of it! Lay up your *treasures* where you must *dwell for ever*. If that be *here*, then scrape, and flatter, and get all that you can: But if it be not *here*, but in *another life*, then hearken to your Lord, and *lay up for your selves treasure in heaven*, and there *let your very hearts be set*, Math. 6. 20, 21. And upon the peril of *everlasting misery*, hearken not to *any man* that will tempt you from a *diligent holy life*. It is a *serious business*, deal seriously in it; and be not *laught*, or *mockt* out of *Heaven*, by the flouts of a distracted sensual Atheist. If any of them will pretend to sobriety and wisdom, and undertake to prove that *God should not be Loved and served*, and *your salvation sought with all your Might*, and

with greater care and diligence than any earthly thing, procure me a sober conference with *that man*, and try whether I shall not prove him to be a befoold servant of the Devil, and a mischievous enemy of your salvation, and his own. O that we might have but *sober debates*, instead of *jeers* and *scorns*, and *railing*, with this sort of men! How quickly should we shew you, that they must renounce the *Scripture*, and renounce *Christianity*, and (if that be nothing with them) that they must renounce *God*, and renounce *right Reason*, and *man* themselves, if they will renounce a *holy*, *heavenly life*, and blame them that make it their *principal business* in the world to prepare for the world to come.

But if they will not be intreated to such a *sober conference*, will you that hear them (if you care what becomes of you) but *come to us*, and hear what *we can say* for a *holy life*, before you hearken to them; and

and let your ſouls have fair play, and ſhew that you have ſo much love to your ſelves, as not to caſt away ſalvation at the deriſion of a fool, before you have heard the other ſide.

If I make not good the *ſtricteſt Laws* of God Almighty, againſt the moſt *ſubtil cavils* of any of the inſtruments of Satan, then tell me that *Infidels* or *Epicures* are in the right. Compare their words with the words of God. Conſider well but that one Text, 2 *Pet.* 3. 11. and tell me whether it ſuit with their opinions; [*Seeing all theſe things muſt be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought we to be in all manner of holy Converſation and Godlineſs; looking for and haſting to the coming of the day of God!*] Did theſe words but ſink into your hearts, the next time you heard any man reproach a *holy*, *heavenly life*, it would perhaps make you think of the words of *Paul* to ſuch another, *Acts* 13. 10. [*O full of all ſubtilty and all miſchief*,

thou childe of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousnes, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right wayes of the Lord?]

And if *Holines* be evil spoken of by them that never tried it, what wonder! Christ hath foretold us that it *must be so*, Matth. 5. 11, 12. *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsly for my sake. Rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.*] John 15. 19, 20. [*If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you, &c.*] 1. Pet. 4. 4, 5, 14. *They think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you, who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and dead. — If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory, and of God resteth upon you; On their part he*

by is evil ſpoken of, but on your part he is glorified.] *Seneca* himſelf oft telleth us, that among the *Heathen*, *Vertue* was a deriſion, ſo far is the nature of man degenerated. The queſtion is not what you are *called* or *taken* to be, but what *you are*. [*Intus tecipſum conſidera (inquit* Sen.) *non qualis aliis credas; Plerunque boni inepti & inertes vocantur. Mihi continget iſte deriſus: Æquo animo audienda ſunt imperitorum convitia; & ad honeſta vadendi contemnendus eſt iſte contemptus.*] that is [*Inwardly conſider of thy ſelf, and judge not what thou art by the words of others: For the moſt part Good men are called fools and dullards: Let me be ſo derided: The reproaches of the ignorant (or unskilful) muſt be patiently heard; and this contempt of one that followeth vertue, muſt be contemned.*] Yea it is the higheſt honour to be content to be *accounted bad*, that we may not be ſo; and the greateſt trial whether we be indeed *ſincere*, to be put

to it, to be either *accounted Hypocrites*, or *to be such*. Methinks I can scarce too oft recite that excellent saying of *Seneca*, *Epist.* 72. *Nemo plus videtur æstimare virtutem, nemo magis illi esse devotus, quam qui boni viri famam perdidit, ne conscientiam perderet;* [that is, *No man seems to set a higher price on vertue; no man seems to be more devoted to it, than he that hath lost the reputation of being a good man, lest he should lose his conscience.*]

But perhaps you'll ask, *May not a man be righteous overmuch?* as is intimated, *Eccles.* 7.16.

I answer, It is *making a mans self overwise or righteous*, that is there reproved. And no doubt but, 1. Many *take on* them, or *make themselves* more wise and righteous than they are; that is, *are Hypocrites*. 2. As *Righteousness* is taken *materially* and in common estimation, so a man may be *too righteous*. He may be *too rigorous*, which is called *Justice*; and too much in grief, or fear, or trouble, and

and too much in any outward act that goeth under the *name* of *duty*. But it is not then truly and formally *duty* and *righteousness*, but *sin*. As to *fast* to the disabling the body for Gods service. To *pray* when we should *hear*: To *hear* when we should be about some *greater work* of *Mercy* or *necessity*: To neglect our *outward labour* and calling on *pretence* of *Religion*: To set up *sacrifice against* or *before mercy*: To *sorrow* when we should *rejoyce*: To *meditate*, and *fear*, and *grieve*, beyond what the *brain can bear*, till it distract us: This is called, *being righteous overmuch*: As also to *make us a Religion* of our *own Inventions*; and to *overdo* with *will-worship* and the *traditions* of men, as the Pharisees and Papists. But indeed this is not *Righteousness*, but *sin*: To be *formally overmuch righteous*, is a contradiction, and impossible. For to go *beyond* the *Rule* is *unrighteousness*: And to do *too much*, is to go beyond the *Rule*.

Unleſs you dare imagine, that God hath erred, and the *Rule* it ſelf is over-ſtrict, and the *Law* is unrighteous: But then *how ſhall God judge the world?* ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 3. 6. *Shall not the Judge of all the world do righteouſly?* Gen. 18. 25. Nay how then ſhould he *be God?*

And is there any thing now left but *Ignorance* or *Wickedneſs* to ſtand up againſt thy ſpeedy diligence? Away then with thy *delays* and *ſlothfulneſs*. If thou *wilt ſerve God with all thy might*, let it be ſeen: If thou *wilt* be a *Chriſtian indeed*, let *deeds declare* it. *Chriſtianity* is not a dead Opinion. If really thou live in hope of heaven, ſuch hopes will make thee *ſtir* for the attainment. Why ſtandeſt thou *idle*, when thou art born for *work*, and all thy faculties are given thee for *work*, and thou art Redeemed for *work?* (for *Evangelical work*.) If thou be *ſanctified*, thou haſt the *Spirit of Chriſt*, a quickning working principle within thee; which way canſt

thou

thou look, but thou mayſt ſee that which would ſhame a ſloathfull ſoul, and fire a cold and frozen heart, and call thee up to a ſpeedy induſtry? what *quickening* words ſhalt thou finde in *Scripture*, if thou wilt but bring thy heart thither as one that is *willing to be quickened?* what *powerfull commands*, what *promiſes*, what *threatnings*, what *holy examples* of exceeding diligence of Chriſt and his Apoſtles? See how the Godly about thee are *at work*, though the world *oppoſe* them and *deride* them! how *earneſtly* they pray! how *carefully* they walk! how ſadly they complain that they are *no better*! And haſt thou *not* an immortal ſoul to ſave or loſe as well as *they?* See what a ſtir the *proud ambitious* perſon makes for leſs than nothing? what a ſtir the *covetous* and the *voluptuous* make for a ſweetned draught of mortal poyſon? And ſhall we be *idle* that are engaged for *Heaven?* Is it reaſon that we ſhould *do leſs* for *God* and our *ſalvation*,

tion, than *they* do for *sinful pleasure* to *damnation?* You cannot *mock them* out of their *Pride* or *Covetousness*: And shall *they mock thee* out of thy *Religion*, and thy *hopes of heaven?* All the commands, and promises, and threatnings of God, the most powerful preaching, that, as it were, sets open Heaven and Hell to them, doth not prevail with fleshly men, to leave the most sordid and unmanly sin: And shall the words or frowns of creeping dust prevail with thee against the work for which thou livest in the world, when thou hast still at *hand unanswerable arguments* from *God*, from thy *self*, from *Heaven* and *Hell*, to put thee on? Were it but for thy *life*, or the *life* of thy children, friend, yea or enemy, or for the quenching of a fire in thy house, or in the Town, wouldst thou not stir and do thy best? And wilt thou be idle when eternal life lies on it? Let Satan bawl against thee by his instruments. Let senseless sinners

talk

talk awhile of they know not what, till God have made them change their note. Let what will be the consequent to thy flesh. These are not matters for a man much to observe, that is engaged for an *endless life*. O what are these to the things that thou art called to prosecute! Hold on then Christians in the work that you have begun. Do it *prudently*, and do it *universally*. Take it *together*, both works of *Piety*, *Justice*, and *Charity*: But do it *Now* without delay, and do it *seriously* with your *might*. I know not what cloud of darkness hath seized on those mens minds that speak against this, or what deadly damp hath seized on their hearts, that hath so benummed and unmanned them. For my own part, though I have long lived in a sense of the preciousness of time, and have not been wholly idle in the world; yet when I have the deepest thoughts of the great everlasting Consequents of my work,

and

and of the uncertainty and shortness of thy Time, I am even amazed to think that my heart can be so slow and senseless, as to *do no more in such a case.* The Lord knows, and my accusing wounded Conscience knows, that my sloathfulness is so much my shame and admiration, that I am astonished to think that my *Resolutions* are no *stronger*, my *affections* no *livelier*, and my *labour* and *diligence* no *greater*, when *God* is the *Commander*, and *his Love* the encourager, and his *wrath* the spur, and *Heaven* or *Hell* must be the issue. O what lives should all of us live, that have things of such unspeakable consequence on our hands, if our hearts were not almost dead within us! Let who will speak against such a life, it shall be my daily grief and moan, that I am *so dull*, and do *so little.* I know that our works do not profit the Almighty, nor bear any proportion with his reward; nor can they stand in his sight, but as accepted

accepted in the Lord our Righteouſneſs, and perfumed by the odour of his merits. But I know they are *Neceſſary*, and they are *ſweet*. Without the holy imployment of our faculties, *this Life* will be but a *burden* or a *dream*, and the *next* an *unexpreſſible miſery*. O therefore that I had more of the Love of God, that my ſoul could get but nearer to him, and ſwiftlier move upward by Faith and Love! O that I had more of that Holy Life, and active diligence, which the ſerpentine *Cainiſh* nature doth abhorr, though I had with it the ſcorns of all about me, and though they made me as they once did better men, as the filth of the World, and the off-ſcowring of all things! 1 *Cor.* 14. 13. O that I had more of this *derided diligence*, and holy converſe with the Lord, though my name were caſt out as an evil doer, *Luk.* 6. 22. and I were ſpit at and buffeted by thoſe that do now but ſecretly reproach! Might I nearly

follow

follow Christ in holiness, why should I grudge to bear his Cross, and to be used as he was used? *Mat.* 26. 67. *Luke* 18. 32. knowing that *if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him*; and *the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*, Rom. 8. 17, 18.

If when we have done all, we are but *unprofitable servants*, and must say, *we have done but our duty*, Luke 17. 10. have we not all more need of monitors to humble us for doing so much less than our duty, than to be reprehended for being too diligent and exact?

I again protest, that it is not any works of supererrogation, or humane invention, superstition, or self-appointment that I am defending, but only the accurate obeying of the Laws of God, and the utmost diligence in such obedience, for the obtaining of everlasting life. Either God hath commanded these works of Holiness,

Justice,

Juſtice, and Charity, or not. If he *have not*, then I have done, and yield the cauſe: It is only *what he hath commanded* that I plead for. O that before you either ſpeak againſt any *Holy duty*, or your ſelves neglect it, you would but come to us, and ſoberly joyn in *ſearching* the *Holy Scriptures*, to ſee whether it be *required there* or *not*; and reſolve but to obey it, if we prove it thence; and if it be but a matter of humane impoſition, we leave you to your ſelves, and ſhould deſire that you may be much left to your liberty in ſuch things; and that you place not too much of your Religion therein. But if indeed it be *commanded in the Word of God*, I beſeech you, as you are *Chriſtians*, and as you are *Men*, remember that whenever you blame or ſcorn a holy *duty*, it is *God himſelf* that you *blame* or *ſcorn*. If it be *naught*, it is long of him that did *command it*: The *Subject muſt obey*; ſhould not ſuch worms as we

obey

obey the infinite God that made us? If it be *a fault to obey*, it is a *duty to rebell*, or *diſobey*; and that muſt be becauſe that God hath *no authority to command*, and that muſt be becauſe he *is not God*. See whether you bring your oppoſition to a *holy life*; And dare you ſtand to this? Dare you as openly *mock God* for *making theſe ſtrict* and *holy Laws*, as you do *men* for *obeying* them? None but a profeſſed Atheiſt dare.

Alas Sirs, it is nothing but *intoxicating proſperity*, and *ſenſual delights*, and *worldly diverſions*, that turn your brains, and leave you not the ſober uſe of Reaſon, that makes you think well of *ungodly ſloathfulneſs*, and makes you think ſo contemptuouſly or ſenſleſly of a *heavenly life*. I tell you (and remember another day that you were told of it) that there is not the boldeſt Infidel in the world, nor the bittereſt enemy to *holineſs* in this Aſſembly, but ſhortly would wiſh they had rather been Saints in rags,

ness, with all the scorn and cruelty that malice can inflict on such, than to have braved it out in pride and gallantry, with the neglect of the great everlasting things. I tell you again, there is not an ungodly wretch that heareth me, but ere long would give a world if he were owner of a holy heart and life, that he had spent his days in holy watchfull preparations for his change, which he spent for that which will deceive him and forsake him.

Methinks I even see how you will passionately rage against your selves, and tear your hearts with self-revenge, (if grace prevent it not by a more safe repentance) when you think too late how you lived on earth, and what golden times of grace you lost, and vilified all that would not lose them as foolishly as you. If Repentance unto life made *Paul* so call himself *foolish, disobedient, deceived, and exceeding mad*, (Tit. 3. 3. Acts 26. 11.) you may imagine how

tormenting

tormenting Repentance will make you *call your ſelves* too late.

O Sirs, you cannot now conceive, while you ſit here in health, and eaſe, and honour, what different thoughts will *then* poſſeſs you of a holy and an unholy life! How mad you will think them that had but *one lifes time* of *preparation* for *eternal life*, and deſperately neglected it: And how ſenſible you will *then* be of the *wiſdom* of *Believers*, that *knew* their *Time*, and *uſed* it while they had it! *Now wiſdom is juſtified of all her children:* but *then* how ſenſibly will it be juſtified of all its *enemies!* O with what gripes will undone ſouls look back on a life of mercy and opportunities, thus baſely undervalued, and ſlept away in dreaming idleneſs, and fooled away for things of nought.

The language of that damned rich man, *Luk.* 16. may *help* you in your *predictions.* O how you will wonder at your ſelves, that ever you could be

ſo

so blind and senseless, as to be no more affected with the warnings of the Lord, and with the forethoughts of everlasting joy or misery! To have but *One small part* of *Time* to do *all that ever must be done* by you for *Eternity*, and *say all that ever you must say* for your own or others souls, and that this was spent in worse than nothing! To have but *One uncertain life*, in which you must run the race that wins or loseth Heaven for ever; and that you should be tempted by a thing of nought, to lose that *One* irrecoverable opportunity, and to sit still, or run another way, when you should have been *making haste with all your Might!* O sirs, the thoughts of this will be *other kind* of thoughts another day than now you feel them; you cannot now *think* how the thoughts of this will then affect you! That you *had a Time* in which you might have *Pray'd*, with promise of acceptance, and had not hearts to *take that time!*

That

That Christ was offered you as well as he was offered them that entertained him; that you were called on and warn'd as well as they, but obstinately despised and neglected all! That Life and Death were set before you, and the everlasting joyes were offered to your choice, against the charms of sinfull Pleasures, and you might have freely had them if you would, and were told that Holiness was the only way, and that it must be *Now or Never*, and yet that you *chose* your own destruction! These thoughts will be *part of Hell* to the ungodly. They will wonder that *Reason* could be so *unreasonable*; and they that had the common wit of man in other matters, should be so far beside themselves in that which is the only thing that it's commendable to be wise for; that such sottish *Reasonings* should prevail with them against the clearest light, and *nothing* should be preferred before *all things*, and arguments fetcht from *chaff* and

dung,

thing, ſhould conquer thoſe that were fetcht from *Heaven*! O what heart-renting thoughts will theſe be, when *Eternity* ſhall afford them leiſure for an impartial review! Yea that they ſhould deceive *others* alſo with ſuch a groſs deceit, and ſcorn at all that would not be as mad as they: that being drunken with the worlds deluſion, they ſhould abuſe all that were truly ſober; that the one thing *needful*, ſhould ſeem to them a *needleſs thing!* That their tongues ſhould plead for theſe deluſions of their wicked hearts, and they ſhould be enemies to thoſe that would not be enemies to God, and to themſelves, and caſt away their Time and Souls as *they* did! They will *wonder* with ſelf-indignation, what could bewitch them into ſo great unreaſonableneſs, below a man, againſt the *light of nature*, as well as of ſupernatural revelation.

Honourable and beloved Hearers, I beſeech you do not take it ill, that I

ſpeak

ſpeak ſo much of theſe matters that are ſo unpleaſant and unwelcome to unbelieving, careleſs, carnal hearts: It is that I may prevent all this in time, by the awakenings of true Repentance: And O that this might be the ſucceſs! That I might hear by your penitent Confeſſions, and ſee by your univerſal ſpeedy reformation; that God hath ſo great Mercy for you, and that theſe perſwaſions might be the means of ſo much happineſs to you, and comfort unto me! However *this Aſſembly* ſhall be *witneſſes* that you were warned: and *Conſcience* ſhall be witneſs, that if you waſte the reſt of your dayes in the pleaſures and vanities of this deceitfull world, it was not becauſe you *could have no better*, and were not *called* to higher things. That if you *yet ſtand idle*, it is not becauſe you could not be *hired*. For in the name of Chriſt I have called you into his vineyard, and told you of your work and wages, and ſham'd

your

your excuſes and objections this day. Come away then ſpeedily from the ſnares of ſinners, and the company of deceived hardened men, and caſt away the works of darkneſs! Heaven is before you! Death is at hand: The Eternal God hath ſent to call you! Mercy doth yet ſtretch forth its arms! You have ſtaid too long, and abuſed Patience too much already: Stay no longer! O now pleaſe God, and comfort us, and ſave your ſelves by *Reſolving that this ſhall be the day*: and *faithfully performing of this your Reſolution*, *Up and be doing*: Believe, Repent, Deſire, Obey, and do all this with all your *Might*. Love him that you muſt Love for ever, and Love him with all your Soul and Might; ſeek that which is truly worth the ſeeking, and will pay for all your coſt and pains: And ſeek it firſt with all your Might; Remembring ſtill it muſt be *Now* or *Never*.

Before

BEfore I conclude, I have two messages yet to deliver to the servants of the Lord: The *One* is of *Encouragement*: The *Other* of *Direction*.

I know that many of you have a *threefold trouble*, which requireth a *threefold comfort* and encouragement. *One* is, that you *have done so little* of your work; but lost so much of your *time* already: Another is, that *you are so opposed* and *hindered*. And the greatest of all is, that *you are yet so dull and slow*: The cure of which must be the matter of my *Directions*.

1. For the *first*: That you have *lost your Time*, must be the matter of your *Humiliation*: But that *all is not lost*, before you see your sin and duty; but yet the patience and mercy of the Lord are attending you, and continuing your hope; this is the *matter of your comfort and encouragement*.

ragement. Repent therefore that you came no *ſooner* home: But *rejoyce* that you are *come home at laſt:* and now be more diligent in *redeeming your time*, in remembrance of the *time already loſt*: And though it muſt be your grief, that your Maſter hath been deprived of ſo much of his ſervice, and others of ſo much good which you ſhould have done them, and that time is loſt that cannot be recalled; yet it is *your comfort*, that your *own Reward* may be equal with them that have born the burthen and heat of the day: *For many that are laſt* (in the time of their coming in) *ſhall be firſt* (in receiving the reward.) This is the meaning of that Parable in *Mat.* 20. which was ſpoken to encourage them that had ſtood out too long, and to rebuke the envy and high expectations of them that came in ſooner: and it is no whit contradictory to thoſe paſſages in *Mat.* 25. which intimate a *different degree of Glory* to be given to them that

have *different degrees of grace* upon their industrious improvement. The *one* Parable, *Mat.* 20. shews *that men shall not be rewarded differently for their longer or shorter continuance in the work*, but that those that came in late, and yet are found with equal holiness, shall be rewarded equally with the first: And more, if their holiness be more, which the *second* Parable expresseth, declaring Gods purpose *to give them the greatest glory, that have improved their holiness to the greatest measure.* O therefore that the sense of your former unkindness might provoke you the more resolvedly to give up your selves in fervent love, and full obedience! and then you will find that your *Time is redeemed*, though it cannot be *recalled*; and that Mercy hath secured your full reward. O what an unspeakable Mercy is this! that if yet you will devote your selves entirely to Christ, and serve him with your might, the little time that yet remains,

he

he will take it as if you had come in at the first hour of the day!

2. And as for the *Opposition* and *hinderances* in your way, they are no other than what your Lord foretold. He hath gone before you, and conquered much more than ever you will encounter from without, (though he had not a body of sin to conquer: and in that respect the conquest of his *Spirit* in his *members*, hath the preheminence of his *personal conquest.*) He hath bid you *Be of good cheer*, because he hath *Overcome the world.* If you will not take up your cross and follow him, you cannot be his Disciples, *John* 16. 33. *Luke* 14, 27, 33. Would you be *soldiers* on condition you *may not fight*; or *fight*, and yet have no *Opposition?* Follow the Captain of your salvation. If mocking, or buffeting, or spitting in his face, or hanging him upon a Cross, or piercing his side, would have made him give up the work of your Redemption,

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you had been left to utter deſperation. The oppoſition that is *conquerable*, ſhould ſerve but to excite your *courage* and *reſolution*, in a caſe of ſuch *Neceſſity*, where you *muſt prevail*, or *periſh*. Have you God himſelf on your ſide, *Rom.* 8. 31. and Chriſt your Captain, and the Spirit of Chriſt to give you courage, and the promiſe to invite you, and Heaven before you, and Hell behind you, and the examples of ſuch an Army of conquering believers: And ſhall the *ſcorns* or *threats* of a crawling worm prevail againſt all theſe for your diſcouragement? You are not afraid leſt any man ſhould pull down the *Sun*, or dry up the *Sea*, or overturn the *Earth*: And are you afraid that man ſhould *conquer God?* Rom. 8. 37. or take you out of the hands of Chriſt? *John* 10. 28, 29. Mark how they uſed *David*, Pſal. 56. 3, 4, 5, 6. *Every day they wreſt my words: all their thoughts are againſt me for evil: They gather themſelves to-*

together: they hide themſelves: thay mark my ſteps when they wait for my ſoul.] But what, did he therefore *fear*, or fly from God? No, [*What time I am afraid, I will truſt in thee; In God will I praiſe his word; In God have I put my truſt; I will not fear what fleſh can do unto me,*] Iſa. 51. 7, 8. [*Hearken to me ye that know righteouſneſs, the people in whoſe heart is my Law; Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings; For the moth ſhall eat them up like a garment, and the worm ſhall eat them like wool: but my righteouſneſs ſhall be for ever, and my ſalvation from generation to generation.*] You deſerve to be ſhut out of Heaven, if you will not bear the breath of a fools deriſion for it.

3. But (ſaith the ſelf-accuſing ſoul) *I am convinced that I ought to be laborious for my ſalvation, and that all this is too little that I can do: but I am dull, and cold, and negligent in all: I am far from doing it with my Might:*

I hear, and read, and pray, as if I did it not, and as if I were half asleep, or my heart were away upon somewhat else. I fear I am but a lazy Hypocrite.]

Answ. I shall first speak to thy *Doubt*, and then to Direct thee against thy sin.

And first, you must be resolved whether your *sloath* be such as is *Predominant*, or *Mortified:* such as proveth that you are *Dead* in sin: or only such as proveth you but *diseased* and *infirm.*

And to know this, you must distinguish. 1. Between the *dulness* and *coldness* of the *Affections*, and the *Unresolvedeness* and *Disobedience* of the soul. 2. Between a *sloathfulness* that keepeth men *from a godly life* in a life of wickedness: and that which only keepeth them from some *particular act of duty*, or abateth the *degree* of their sincere affection and obedience. 3. Between that sloath that is the *vicious habit of the Will*; and that which is the *effect of age*, or *sickness*,

or

or *melancholy*, or other diſtemper of the body.

And ſo the caſe lieth plain before you. 1. If it be not only your *Affections* that are *dull*, but your *Will* through ſloath is *unreſolved*; and this not only in a temptation to the abatement of ſome *Degrees*, and the neglect of ſome *particular Duty*, but againſt a *Holy life*, and againſt the *forſaking of your reigning ſin*; and this be not only through ſome *bodily diſtemper*, diſabling your *Reaſon*, but from the *vicious Habit* of *your Wills*: then is your *ſloath* a *Mortal* ſign, and proves you in a graceleſs ſtate: But if the *ſloath* which you complain of, be only the *dulneſs* of your *Affections*, and the *backwardneſs* of your *wills* to ſome *high degrees*, or *particular Duties*, and the effect of ſome *bodily diſtemper*, or the *weakneſs* of your *ſpiritual life*, while your *Wills* are *Habitually reſolved for God and a Holy life*, againſt *a worldly fleſhly life*: This is your *infirmity*, and a ſin

to be lamented, but not a mark of death and graceleſneſs.

You *will* have a *backward ſloathful heart* to *ſtrive* with while you live. But bleſs God that you are *offended* with it, and would fain be delivered from it. This was *Pauls* evidence, *Rom.* 7. 24. You will *have fleſh*, and *fleſh* will plead for its intereſt, and will be ſtriving againſt the Spirit; But bleſs God that you have alſo the Spirit to ſtrive againſt the fleſh. Be thankful that you have *Life* to feel your ſickneſs, though you languiſh under it, and cannot work as healthful men; And that you are in the way to heaven, though you go not ſo faſt as you ſhould and would.

2. But yet, though you *have Life*, it is ſo grievous to be *diſeaſed*, and *languiſh* under ſuch an *Infirmity* as *ſloath*, that I adviſe you to *ſtir* up your ſelves to the utmoſt, and give not way to a lazy temper; and that you may ſerve the Lord with all your

Might,

Might, I recommend these few *Directions* to your observation.

Direct. 1. When you would be quickened up to seriousness and diligence, *have ready at hand such quickning Considerations as are here before propounded to you; and set them before you, and labour to work them upon your hearts.* Powerful truths would have some power upon your souls, if you will but soberly apply your reason to them, and plead them with your selves, as you would do with another in any of your Reproofs or Exhotations.

Direct. 2. *Take heed lest any worldly design or interest, or any lust or sensual delight, divert your minds from God and duty.* For all the powers of your soul will languish, when you should set them on work on spiritual things, and your hearts will be abroad, when you should be wholly taken up with *God*, if once they be entangled with worldly things. Watch therefore over them in your *Callings*,

leſt the creature ſteal too deep into your affections: For if you be alive to the world, you will be in that meaſure dead to God.

Direct. 3. *If it be poſſible, live under a lively Miniſtry, that when your hearts go cold and dull unto the Aſſemblies, they may come warm and quickened home.* Life cheriſheth life, as fire kindleth fire. The Word and Ordinances of God are quick, powerful, and ſharper than any two edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the hearts, *Heb.* 4. 12. And therefore it may do much to make you feel. Many a thouſand hath it pricked at the heart, and ſent them home alive, that before were dead, *Acts* 2. 37. Much more may you expect, that it ſhould excite the principles which you have already.

Direct. 4. *If it may be, converſe with lively, active, ſtirring Chriſtians:* But eſpecially have *one ſuch* for a

boſome

bosome friend, that will warm you when you are cold, and help to awake you when you drop asleep, and will not comply with you in a declining, lazy, and unprofitable course, *Eccles.* 4. 9, 10, 11, 12. *Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour: For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; But woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat; but how can one alone be warm? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

Direct. 5. *Put not away from you the day of death. Look not for long life.* It is the *Life to come* that must be the *Life* of all your duties here: and *distant* things do *lose* their *force*. Set Death, and Judgement, and Eternal Life, continually as *neer at hand*: Live in a watchful expectation of your change: Do all as *dying men*, and as passing to receive the

recom-

recompence of endleſs joy or woe; and this will quicken you. To this end, go often to the *Houſe of Mourning*, and be not unſeaſonably or immoderately in the houſe of Mirth. When you obſerve what is the end of all men, the heart will be made better by it, *Eccleſ.* 7. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. But exceſs of carnal mirth doth infatuate men, and deſtroy their wiſdom, ſeriouſneſs, and ſobriety. Keep always a ſenſe of the brevity of life, and of the precioufneſs of Time, and remember that its poſting on whether you work or play: Methinks, if you forget any of the reſt, this one Conſideration that we have in hand, ſhould make you beſtir you *with your Might*, that *It muſt be now or Never.*

I ſhall only add *two* needful *cautions*, leſt while we cure one diſeaſe, we cauſe another (as knowing that corrupted nature is uſed to run from extream into extream.)

1. *Deſire*

1. *Desire and labour more for an high Estimation of things spiritual, and eternal, and a fixed Resolution, and an even and diligent endeavour, than for passionate feelings and affections.* For *these latter* are more unconstant in the best, and depend much on the temper of the body, and are not of so great necessity as the former, though excellent in a just degree and season. (For it's possible that passions even about good things may be too much; when *Estimation*, *Resolution*, and regular *Endeavours* cannot.)

2. *Be suspicious when you have the warmest and livelyest Affections, lest your judgements should be perverted by following when they should lead.* It's very common for *Zeal* and *strong Affections*, even to that which is *good*, to occasion the *mistakes* of the *understanding*, and make men look *all on one side*, and think they can *never go far enough* from some *particular sins*, till ignorantly they are carried into some perhaps as great on the *other hand*.

hand. Be warned by the ſad experience of *theſe times*, to ſuſpect your *judgements* in the *fervour* of your *affections.*

And obſerving *theſe cautions*, let nothing abate your *Zeal* and *Diligence*; But whatever *Duty* is ſet before you, Do *it with your Might: for it muſt be Now or Never.*

THough I know that the enmity to a holy heavenly life is ſo radicated in corrupted nature, that all that I have ſaid is neceſſary and too little; yet ſome I know will think it ſtrange that I ſhould intimate, that any that preach the Goſpel are guilty of any meaſure of this ſin, and will think that I intend by it to reflect upon ſome parties above the reſt. But again I profeſs, that it is no party but the Devils party, and the ungodly party, that I mean. And it's hard if you will not believe me concerning my own ſenſe.

Nor

Nor is it my deſire that any of the odiouſneſs of Schiſm, Sedition, Rebellion, or Diſobedience to Authority, ſhould be ſo much as diminiſhed by any mens profeſſion of Godlineſs. No, I beſeech you, by how much the more godly you are, by ſo much the more deteſt all theſe; Godlineſs tendeth to ſhame and condemn theſe odious ſins, and not to be a cloak for them or any extenuation: Nay, what can more aggravate them, than that they ſhould be found in the Profeſſors of Godlineſs? I again profeſs that I have no deſign but to plead for *ſerious* diligence in the Religion which we are all agreed in, and to ſtop the mouth of thoſe that wickedly ſpeak againſt it.

But alas, it is too evident that I have too many to ſpeak to, that are not innocent: why elſe doth Scripture tell us that ſuch there will be ſtill to the end of the world? and that there are ſome that preach Chriſt of ſtrife and envy, to add affliction

to

to the bonds of the afflicted! And how came holy M. *Bolton* to find ſo much work for theſe rebukes ſo lately in his time, as in his Books you find? And can we already forget what abundance of *Antinomian* Teachers were among us, that turned out the very doctrine of practical diligence, and cried it down as a ſetting up our ſelves and our own works, and as injurious to free grace, and under pretence of exalting Chriſt, did ſet up a heartleſs, lifeleſs doctrine, that tended to turn out the life of Chriſtianity, and take men off their neceſſary diligence, as a legal dangerous thing?

And what Ordinance of God hath not been caſt out by Preachers themſelves upon Religious pretences, Family-duties, Catechiſing, Singing of Pſalms, Baptiſm, the Lords Supper, and which not? And if all theſe were down, wherein ſhould the practice of Religion conſiſt? And what abundance of Pamphlets had

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we that laboured to make the Orthodox faithfull Ministry a very scorn, and deride them for their faithfull service of God, and their faithfulness to their Superiors, in opposition to their unrighteous wayes? I am loth to blot my papers, and trouble your ears with the names of the *Martin*-mar-priests, and a multitude of such others which I mean.

And let no Papist, or any Enemy of our Church, reproach us, because such enemies to *Holiness* are found among us. Can it be expected that our Church should be better than the Family of *Adam*, that had a *Cain*? Or of *Noah*, that had a *Cham*? or of Christ, that had a *Judas*? And are there not far more enemies to serious Godliness among the Papists themselves, than among us? One instance out of the Life of *Philip Nerius*, the Father of the Oratorians, I will put into the Preface, because it is too long to be here inserted. There is no place,

no

no rank of men in the world, where ſome of the enemies of a Holy life are not to be found, even among thoſe that profeſs the ſame Religion in Doctrinals, with thoſe whom they oppoſe. Chriſt and the Devil have their ſeveral Armies; And if once the Devil disband his Soul'diers, and have none to oppoſe a holy life, then tell me that it's a needleſs thing to defend it and to confute them. But I am liſted under Chriſt, and will never give over pleading for him, till his adverſaries give over pleading againſt him, and his Cauſe, as long as he continueth my liberty and duty. And bleſſed be the Lord, that if an Hypocritical Preacher be found among us, that ſecretly or openly diſgraceth a diligent holy life, there are more able, holy, faithfull ones to confute him both by Doctrine and by their Lives, than are to be found in any other Kingdom in the world proportionably, that ever I could hear of. And that the faithfull

Diſciples

Diſciples are ſo many, and the *Judas's* ſo few, how great a bleſſing is it to this Land, and how great an honour to his Majeſties Gov.rnment and to the Church in his Dominions! The Lord teach this ſinful Nation to be thankful, and pardon their ingratitude, and never deprive them of this forfeited mercy. The Lord teach them to hearken to the Friends, and not to the Enemies of Holineſs, and never to receive a wound at the heart of their Religion, however they hear their ſmaller differences about things circumſtantial.

And now I ſhould conclude, I am *loth to end*, for fear leſt I have not *yet* prevailed with you; What are you now *reſolved to do*, from this day forward? It is *work* that we have been ſpeaking of, and *neceſſary work* of endleſs conſequence, which *muſt* be done, and quickly done, and throughly done. Are you not convinced that *it is ſo?* that plowing and ſowing are not more neceſſary to your harveſt,

veſt, than the work of holineſs in this day of grace is neceſſary to your ſalvation? You are blinde if you ſee not this: you are dead if you feel it not: what then will you do? For Gods ſake, and for your own ſake, ſtand not demurring till time be gone. It is all that the Devil deſireth, if he can but find you one thing or other to be thinking, and talking, and doing about, to keep you from this till time be gone: and then he will inſult over you, and then he that kept you from ſeeing and feeling, will help you to ſee and feel to your calamity: Then the *Devil* will make you feel that which Preachers could not make you feel: and he will make you think of that, and lay it cloſe enough to your hearts, which we could not get you to lay to heart. Now we ſtudy and preach to you in hope; but then (alas it breaks our hearts to think of it) we have done with you for ever, becauſe all hope is gone.

Then

Then the Devil may challenge a Minister [Now do thy worſt to bring this ſinner to repentance: Now call to him to conſider, and believe, and come to Chriſt; Now offer him mercy, and intreat him to accept it: Now cry to him to take heed of ſin and of temptations, that he come not to this place of torments: Now tell him of the beauty or neceſſity of holineſs, and call upon him to *turn* and *live*: Now do thy worſt to reſcue him from my power, and to ſave his ſoul.] Alas poor ſinners! will you ſtop your ears, and go on in ſin, and damn your ſelves, and break our hearts to foreſee that day! Muſt we ſee the Devil go away with ſuch a prey, and ſhall we not reſcue your captivated ſouls, becauſe you will not hear, you will not ſtir, you will not conſent! O hear the God of Heaven, if you will not hear us, who calleth to you, *Return*, and *live*! Oh hear him that ſhed his blood for

ſouls,

ſouls, and tendreth you now ſalvation by his blood! O hear without any more delay, before all is gone, and you are gone, and he that now deceiveth you, torment you! Yet hold on a little longer in a carnal, earthly, unſanctified ſtate, and it is too late to hope, or pray, or ſtrive for your ſalvation: Yet a little longer, and mercy will have done with you for ever; and Chriſt will never invite you more, nor never offer to cleanſe you by his blood, or ſanctifie you by his Spirit! Yet a little longer, and you ſhall never hear a Sermon more, and never more be troubled with thoſe Preachers that were in good ſadneſs with you, and longed once for your converſion and ſalvation! O ſleepy dead-hearted ſinners, what ſhould I do to ſhew you how near you ſtand to Eternity, and what is now doing in the World that you are going to, and how theſe things are thought on there! What ſhould I do to make you know how Time is valued, how

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ſin and holineſs are eſteemed in the world where you muſt live for ever! What ſhould I do to make you know thoſe things to day, which I will not thank you to know when you are gone hence! O that the Lord would open your eyes in time! Could I but make you know theſe things as Believers ſhould know them, I ſay not as thoſe that *ſee them*, nor yet as *dreamers*, that do not regard them, but as thoſe that believe that they muſt ſhortly ſee them, what a joyfull hours work ſhould I eſteem this? how happy would it be to you and me! If every word were accompanied with tears! if I followed you home and begg'd your conſideration on my bare knees, or as a beggar beggs an alms at your doors: if this Sermon coſt me as many cenſures or ſlanders as ever Sermon did, I ſhould not think it too dear, if I could but help you to ſuch a ſight of the things we ſpeak of, that you might truly underſtand them as they are: that

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you had but a true awakened apprehenſion of the ſhortneſs of your day, of the nearneſs of eternity, and of the endleſs conſequence of your preſent work; and what holy labour and ſinfull loytering will be thought of in the world to come for ever! But when we ſee you ſin, and trifle, and no more regard your endleſs life, and ſee alſo what haſte your Time is making, and yet cannot make you underſtand theſe things; when we know our ſelves as ſure as we ſpeak to you, that you will ſhortly be aſtoniſhed at the review of your preſent ſloath and folly, and when we know that theſe matters are not thought of in another world, as they are among the ſleepy or the Bedlam-ſinners here, and yet know not how to *make you know it*, whom it doth ſo exceeding much concern, *this* amazeth us, and almoſt breaks our hearts! Yea when we tell you of things that are *paſt doubt*, and can be no further matter of controverſie, then men have

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ſold their underſtandings, and betrayed their reaſon to their ſordid luſts, and yet we cannot get reaſonable men to know that which they cannot chooſe but know, to know that ſeriouſly and practically which alwayes hath a witneſs in their breaſts, and which none but the profligate dare deny; I tell you ſinners, this, even this is worſe than a priſon to us: It is you that are our Perſecutors: It's you that are the daily ſorrow of our hearts; It's you that diſappoint us of our hopes, and make us loſe ſo much of the labour of our lives! And if all others did as ſome do by us, alas, how ſad an employment ſhould we have! and how little would it trouble us to be ſilenced and laid aſide! If we were ſick of the ambitious or covetous thirſt, we ſhould then ſay that it is they that deny us wealth and honour that diſappoint us. But if we are Chriſtians, this is not our caſe, but it is the thirſt after your converſion and ſalvation which af-

ſecteth us: and therefore it is you, even you that linger in your ſins and delay repentance, and forget your home, and neglect your ſouls, it is you that diſappoint us, and you that are our afflicters; and as much as you think you befriend us when you plead our cauſe againſt men of violence and rage, it is you that ſhall anſwer for the loſs of our time, and labour, and hope, *and for the grieving* of your Teachers hearts.

Sinners, whatever the devil and raging paſſion may ſay againſt a holy life, God and your own conſciences ſhall be our witneſſes, that we deſired nothing unreaſonable or unneceſſary at your hands. I know it is the maſter-piece of the Devils craft, when he cannot keep all Religion in contempt, to raiſe up a duſt of controverſie in the World about Names, and Forms, and Circumſtances in Religion, that he may keep men buſily ſtriving about theſe, while Religion it ſelf is neglected

or unknown; and that he may make men believe that they have ſome Religion, becauſe they are for one ſide or other in theſe controverſies: and eſpecially that he may entice men to number the ſubſtantials of Religion it ſelf among theſe leſſer doubtfull points, and make ſinners believe that it is but the preciſe opinion of one party that they reject, while they reject the ſerious practice of all true Religion. And ſo the Devil gets more by theſe petty quarrels and controverſies, occaſioned by contentious empty men, than he could have done by the open oppoſition of Infidels, Heathens, or the prophane: ſo that neither I nor any man that opinionative men have a mind to quarrel with, can tell how to exhort you to the very practice of Chriſtianity it ſelf, but you are preſently caſting your thoughts upon ſome points wherein we are reported to differ from you, or remembring ſome clamors of malicious

men, that prejudice againſt the perſon of the ſpeaker, may keep your ſouls from profiting to ſalvation by the doctrine which even your ſelves profeſs.

If this be the caſe of any one of you, I do not mean your conſciences ſhall ſo ſcape the power or evidence of the truth. Doſt thou talk of our differences about forms and ceremonies? Alas man, what's that to the meſſage which we come about to thee? what's that to the buſineſs that we are preaching of? The queſtion that I am putting to you, is not whether you will be for this form of Church-Government or for that, for a ceremony or againſt it; but it is, whether you will hearken in time to God and Conſcience, and be as buſie to provide for Heaven as ever you have been to provide for Earth? and whether you will ſet your ſelves to do the work that you are Created and Redeemed for? This is the buſineſs that I am

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ſent to call you to; what ſay you? will you do it, and do it ſeriouſly without delay? you ſhall not be able to ſay, that I called you to a party, a faction, or ſome opinion of my own, or laid your ſalvation upon ſome doubtfull controverſie. No ſinner, thy Conſcience ſhall have no ſuch ſhift for its deceit: It is godlineſs, ſerious and practical godlineſs that thou art called to. It is nothing but what all Chriſtians in the World, both Papiſts, and Greeks, and Proteſtants, and all the parties among thoſe that are true Chriſtians, are agreed in the profeſſion of. That I may not leave thee in any darkneſs which I can deliver thee from, I'le tell thee diſtinctly, though ſuccinctly, what it is that thou art thus importuned to; and tell me then whether it be that which any Chriſtian can make doubt of.

1. That which I intreat of thee, is but to live as one that verily believeth there is a God! and that this God is the Creator, the Lord, and Ruler

of the world: and that it is incomparably more of our buſineſs to underſtand and obey his Laws, and as faithfull Subjects to be conformed to them, than to obſerve or be conformed to the Laws of man: And to live as men that do believe that this God is Almighty, and the greateſt of men are leſs than crawling worms to him; and that he is infinitely wiſe, and the wiſdom of man is fooliſhneſs to him; and that he is infinitely good and amiable; and the beſt of creatures is dung and filth in compariſon of him: and that his love is the only felicity of man; and that none are happy but thoſe that do enjoy it; and none that do enjoy it can be miſerable: and that riches, and honour, and fleſhly delights are brutiſh vanities in compariſon of the eternal love of God. Live but as men that heartily believe all this, and I have that I come for; And is any of this a matter of controverſie or doubt? not among Chriſtians

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I am ſure: not among wiſe men. It is no doubt to thoſe in Heaven, nor to thoſe in Hell, nor to thoſe that have not loſt their underſtandings upon earth. Live then according to theſe Truths.

2. Live as men that verily believe that *mankind is fallen into ſin and miſery:* and that all men are corrupted, and under the condemnation of the Law of God, till they are delivered, pardoned, reconciled to God, and made new creatures by a renewing, reſtoring, ſanctifying change. Live but as men that believe that this cure muſt be wrought, and this great reſtoring change muſt be made upon your ſelves, if it be not done already. Live as men that have ſo great a work to look after; And is this a matter of any doubt or controverſie? ſure it is not to a Chriſtian: And methinks it ſhould not be to any man elſe that knoweth himſelf, any more than to a man in a Dropſie, whether he be diſeaſed, when

he feels the thirſt and ſees the ſwelling. Did you but know what cures and changes are neceaſſarily to be made upon your diſeaſed miſerable ſouls, if you care what becomes of them, you would ſoon ſee cauſe to look about you.

3. Live but as men that verily believe that you *are Redeemed by the Son of God*, who hath ſuffered for your ſins, and brought you the tidings of pardon and Salvation, which you may have if you will give up your ſelves to him who is the Phyſician of ſouls, to be healed by him: Live as men that believe that the infinite love of God revealed to loſt mankind in the Redeemer, doth bind us to love him with all our hearts, and ſerve him with all our reſtored faculties, and to work as thoſe that have the greateſt thankfulneſs to ſhew, as well as the greateſt mercies to receive, and miſery to eſcape: and as thoſe that believe that if ſinners that without Chriſt had no hope,

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ſhall now love their ſins and refuſe to leave them, and to repent and be converted, and unthankfully reject the mercy of Salvation ſo dearly bought, and ſo freely offered them; their damnation will be doubled as their ſin is doubled. Live but as men that have ſuch Redemption to admire, ſuch mercy to entertain, and ſuch a Salvation to attain, and that are ſure they can never ſcape if they continue to neglect ſo great Salvation, *Heb.* 2. 3. And is there any controverſie among Chriſtians in any of this? There is not certainly.

4. Live but as men that believe that *the Holy Ghoſt is given by Jeſus Chriſt to convert, to quicken, to ſanctifie all that he will ſave:* and that except you be born again of the Spirit, you ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; and that if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, the ſame is none of his, *Joh.* 3. 5, 6. *Rom.* 8. 9. And that without

this no patching or mending of your lives by any common principles will ſerve the turn for your Salvation, or make you acceptable to God, *Heb.* 11. 6. Live as men that believe that this Spirit is given by the hearing of the Word of God, and muſt be prayed for, and obeyed, and not reſiſted, quencht and grieved. And is there any controverſie among Chriſtians in any of this? Ask thoſe that make a mock at Holineſs, Sanctification and the Spirit, whether they be not baptized into the name of the Holy Ghoſt, and profeſs to believe in him as their Sanctifier, as well as in the Son as their Redeemer? And then ask them whether it be not a thing that ſhould make even a devil to tremble to come ſo near the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, as to mock at his Office and Sanctifying work, and at the holineſs without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord! *Heb.* 12. 14. and this after they are baptized and profeſs to believe

lieve in the Holy Ghoſt as their Sanctifier.

5. Live but as men that believe that ſin is the greateſt evil, the thing which the Holy God abhorreth. And then you will never make a mock of it, as *Solomon* ſaith the fooliſh do, *Prov.* 14. 9. nor ſay, What harm is in it?

6. Live but as men that believe no ſin is pardoned without Repentance; and that Repentance is the loathing and forſaking of ſin: and that if it be *true*, it will not ſuffer you to live wilfully in any groſs ſin, nor to deſire to keep the leaſt infirmity, nor to be loth to know your unknown ſins.

7. Live as thoſe that believe that you are to be members of the *Holy Catholick Church*, and therein to hold the *Communion of Saints*. And then you will know that it is not as a member of any Sect or Party, but as a holy member of this holy Church, that you muſt be ſaved: and that

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it is the name of a *Chriſtian* which is more honourable than the name of any diviſion or ſubdiviſion among Chriſtians, whether Greek, or Papiſt, or Proteſtant, or Prelatiſt, or Presbyterian, or Independent, or Anabaptiſt. It is eaſie to be of any one of theſe parties; but to be a *Chriſtian*, which all pretend to, is not ſo eaſie. It is eaſie to have a burning zeal for any divided party or cauſe: but the common zeal for the Chriſtian Religion is not ſo eaſie to be kindled or kept alive: but requireth as much diligence to maintain it, as dividing zeal requireth to quench it. It is eaſie to love a party as a party: but to keep up Catholick charity to all Chriſtians, and to live in that holy love and converſe which is requiſite to [a Communion of Saints] is not ſo eaſie. Satan and corrupted Nature befriend the love and zeal of faction, which is confined to a party on a controverted cauſe: but they are enemies to the

love

love of Saints, and to the zeal for holineſs, and to the Catholick charity which is from the Spirit of Chriſt. You ſee I call you not to diviſion, not to ſide with Sects: but to live as members of a holy Catholick Church, which conſiſteth of all that are holy in the world: and to live as thoſe that believe the *Communion* of *Saints*.

8. Live as thoſe that believe that there is a life everlaſting, where the Sanctified ſhall live in endleſs joy, and the unſanctified in endleſs puniſhment and wo: live but as men that verily believe a Heaven and a Hell, and a day of judgement, in which all the actions of this life muſt be reviſed, and all men judged to their endleſs ſtate. Believe theſe things heartily, and then think a holy diligence needleſs if you can: Then be of the mind of the deriders and enemies of godlineſs if you can! If one ſight of Heaven or Hell would ſerve without any more ado, inſtead of other arguments, to confute all the cavils of the

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diſtracted world, and to juſtifie the moſt diligent Saints in the judgement of thoſe that now abhor them, why ſhould not a ſound belief of the ſame thing in its meaſure do the ſame?

9. Live but as thoſe that believe this life is given us as the only Time to make preparation for eternal life: and that all that ever ſhall be done for your ſalvation, muſt be Now, juſt Now, before your time is ended: Live as thoſe that know (and need not faith to tell them) that this Time is ſhort, and almoſt at an end already, and ſtayeth for no man, but as a poſt doth haſte away. It will not ſtay while you are triming you, or ſporting you: It will not ſtay while you are taken up in Stage-playes, in complements, in idle viſits, or any impertinent, needleſs things; It will not tarry while you ſpend yet the other year, or month, or day, in your worldlineſs, or ambition, or in your luſts and ſenſual delights; and put off your Repentance to another time.

time. O ſirs, for the Lords ſake do but live as men that muſt ſhortly be buried in a grave, and their ſouls appear before the Lord, and as men that have but this little Time, to do all for their everlaſting life, that ever muſt be done. O live as men that are ſure to die, and are not ſure to live till to morrow: And let not the noiſe of pleaſure or worldly buſineſs, or the chat or ſcorns of miſerable fools, bear down your reaſon, and make you live as if you knew not what you know: or as if there were any doubt about theſe things. Who is the man, and what is his name, that dare contradict them, and can make it good? O do not ſin againſt your knowledge: Do not ſtand ſtill and ſee your glaſs running, and Time making ſuch haſte, and yet make no more haſte your ſelves, than if you were not concerned in it: Do not, O do not ſlumber, when Time and Judgement never ſlumber; nor ſit ſtill when you have ſo much to do,

and

and know all that is now left undone must be undone for ever! Alas sirs, how many questions of exceeding weight have you yet to be resolved in? whether you are truly sanctified? whether your sins be pardoned? whether you shall be saved when you die? whether you are ready to leave this world, and enter upon another? I tell you the answering of these and many more such questions, is a matter of no small *difficulty* or *concernment*. And all these must be done in this little and uncertain time. It must be *Now* or *Never*. Live but as men that believe and consider these certain unquestionable things.

10. Lastly, Will you but live as men that believe that the world and the flesh are the deadly enemies of your salvation: And that believe that if any man love the world, (so far) the love of the Father is not in him, 1 *John* 2. 15, 16. And as men that believe, that, if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if by the

the Spirit ye mortifie the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live, *Rom.* 8. 13. and that thoſe that are in Chriſt Jeſus, and are freed from condemnation, are ſuch as walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit, *Rom.* 8. 1. And that we muſt make no proviſion for the fleſh to ſatisfie the will or luſts thereof, *Rom.* 13. 10. and muſt not walk in gluttony and drunkenneſs, in chambering and wantonneſs, in ſtrife and envying, *verſ.* 13. but muſt have our hearts where our treaſure is, *Matth.* 6. 21. and converſe in Heaven, *Phil.* 3. 18, 19, 20. and being riſen with Chriſt, muſt ſeek the things that are above, and ſet our affections on them, and not on the things that are on earth, *Col.* 3. 1, 2, 3.

Sirs, will you ſay that any of this is our ſingular opinion, or matter of controverſie and doubt? Are not all Chriſtians agreed in it? Do you not your own ſelves profeſs that you believe it? Live then but as thoſe that do believe it, and condemn not your ſelves

ſelves in the things that you confeſs.

I tell thee, if now thou wilt refuſe to live according to theſe common acknowledged truths, thou ſhalt never be able to ſay before the Lord, that mens controverſie about a ceremony, or Church-Government, or the manner of worſhip, were the things that hindered thee! But all ſorts and Sects ſhall be witneſſes againſt thee, and condemn thee; for they all agreed in theſe things: even the bloodieſt Sect, that impriſon, and torment, and kill others for their differences in ſmaller matter, are yet agreed with thoſe that they perſecute and murder, about theſe things: Papiſts are agreed in them, and Proteſtants are agreed in them: All the Sects that are now quarrelling among us, and in the world, are agreed in them, who are but meet for the name of Chriſtians. All theſe will be ready to bear witneſs againſt the prophane, the ſenſual, the ſlothful neleƈter of God and his Salvation, and

and to ſay, we all confeſſed, notwithſtanding our other differences, that all theſe things were certain truths, and that mens lives ſhould be ordered according unto theſe.

But if yet you pretend controverſie to cover your malignity or ungodlineſs, I will go a little further, and tell you that in the *Matter* as well as in the *Principles*, it is things that we are all agreed in, which I call you to, and which the ungodly do refuſe: Ile briefly name them.

1. One part of your work which we urge you to do with all your might, is ſeriouſly and ſoberly to conſider often of all theſe truths beforementioned, which you ſay you do believe: And is it any controverſie with reaſonable men whether they ſhould uſe their reaſon? or with believers, whether they ſhould conſider and lay to heart the *weight* and uſe of the things which they believe?

2. Another part of your work, is to

to love God with all your ſoul and might; and to make him your delight, and to ſeek firſt his Kingdom, and the righteouſneſs thereof; and to ſet your affections on the things above, and to live on earth as the Heirs of Heaven: And is there any controverſie among Proteſtants, Papiſts, or any about this?

3. Another part of your work is to ſee the honouring of God in the world, the promoting of his Kingdom and Government in your ſelves and others, the doing of his will, and obeying of his Laws: And is there any controverſie in this?

4. Another part of your work is to mortifie the fleſh, and reject its conceits, and deſires, and luſts, which reſiſt the foreſaid obedience to God; and to caſt out the inordinate *love* and *care* of worldly things: to refuſe the Counſels, the Commands, the Will, the enticements and perſwaſions of man, which contradict the Commands

mands and Will of God: and to forſake all that you have in the world rather than forſake your dear Redeemer, and hazard your Salvation by any wilful ſin: To take up your Croſs and follow Chriſt through a life of ſuffering to glory; I know there is difficulty enough in all this, and that fleſh will repine againſt it and abhor it: But is there any controverſie about it among any true believers? Is not all this the expreſs Command of God, and neceſſary to Salvation?

5. Another part of your work is to avoid temptations, and fly from the occaſions and appearances of evil, and not only to avoid that which is directly evil it ſelf, but that alſo which would draw you into evil (as far as you can) and to keep as far as may be from the brink of Hell and danger, and to have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, nor be companions with them, but reprove them, and mourn for the

unclean

unclean and wicked converſation of the world. This is it that we intreat of you; And is there any matter of controverſie in all this?

6. Another part of the work which we call you to, is, to redeem this little Time that is allotted you; To make the beſt of it, and improve it to the greateſt furtherance of your Salvation: To loſe none of it upon unprofitable things: To ſpend it in thoſe works which will comfort you moſt when time is gone; If it will be more comfortable to you in the day of Judgement, that you have ſpent your Time in Plays, and ſports, and idleneſs, and worldly cares, and pleaſures, than in ſerving God, and preparing for another life, then hold on, and do ſo to the end: But if it will not, then do what you would hear of, ſeeing you muſt hear of it: ſpend none of your Time in idleneſs and unfruitful things, till you have no better and more neceſſary things to ſpend it in, and till you have Time

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to ſpare from more important work. This is our requeſt to you, that you would not loſe one hour of your precious Time, but ſpend it as thoſe that have loſt too much, and have but a little more to ſpend in preparation for eternity. And is this any Schiſmatical or factious motion? Is there any thing controvertible, or which any Chriſtian can ſpeak againſt, in any of this?

7. Another part of your work is, to ſearch the Scripture as that which containeth your directions for eternal life, *John* 5. 39. To love the Word of God more than thouſands of gold and ſilver, and preſer it before your neceſſary food, *Pſal.* 119. 72. *Job* 23. 12. and to meditate in it day and night, as that which is your pleaſure and delight, *Pſal.* 1. 2. and as that which is able to make you wiſe unto Salvation, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. and to build you up, and give you an inheritance among the ſanctified, *Act.* 20. 32. That you lay

lay up the Word of God in your hearts, and teach them diligently to your Children, and talk of them when you ſit in your houſes, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you riſe up, *Deut.* 6. 6, 7. and 11. 18, 19. that ſo you and your houſholds may ſerve the Lord, *Joſh.* 24. 15. This is the work that we call you to: And is there any thing that a Chriſtian can make a controverſie of in all this? Is there any thing that Proteſtants are not agreed of?

8. Another part of your work is, that you guard your tongues, and take not the name of God in vain, and ſpeak no reproaches or ſlanders againſt your Brethren, and that no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouths, but that which is good to the uſe of edifying, and that it may miniſter grace unto the hearers, *Epheſ.* 4. 29. and that fornication, uncleanneſs, and covetouſneſs be not once named among you, as becometh

becometh Saints: neither filthineſs, nor fooliſh talking, nor jeaſting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks, *Eph.* 5. 3, 4. And is there any thing of doubt or controverſie in this?

9. Another part of the work which we perſwade you to, is to pray continually, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 17. and not to wax faint, *Luke* 18. 1. to be fervent and importunate with God, as thoſe that know the greatneſs of their neceſſity, *Luke* 18. 6, 7. *Jam.* 5. 15. That you pray with all prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit, *Eph.* 6. 18. and in every thing by prayer and ſupplication to make known your requeſts to God, *Phil.* 4. 6. that you pray for Kings and all in Authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty, 1 *Tim.* 2. 1 2. And is there any thing in all this that any Chriſtian can deny?

10. Laſtly, the work we call you to, is, to love your neighbours as your ſelves, and to do to others as you

would have them (*arbitrio ſuo*) do to you! To ſcorn, deride, moleſt, impriſon, ſlander, or hurt no man, till you would be ſo uſed your ſelves on the like occaſion. To rejoyce in other mens profit and reputation as your own. To envy none, to hate no man, to wrong none in their perſons, eſtates, or names; To preſerve the chaſtity, honour and eſtate of your neighbour as your own. To love your enemies, and forgive them that wrong you, and pray for them that hate, and hurt, and perſecute you. This is your work: And is there any thing of faction, Schiſm or controverſie in this? No, you ſhall ſhortly be convinced, that the differences and controverſies of believers, and the many opinions about Religion, were a wretched hypocritical pretence for your neglect and contempt of the ſubſtance of Religion, about which there was no difference, but all parties were agreed in the confeſſion of the truth, however hypocrites would not

live

live according to their own profes-sions.

But perhaps you'l say, that there is such difference in the *Manner* yet among them that agree in the *Princi-ples* and the *Matter*, that you know not which way God is to be wor-shipped?

I answer, 1. Do you practise as aforesaid, according to the Princi-ples and matter agreed on, or not? If you do not, it is but gross hy-pocrisie to pretend disagreements in the *Manner*, as an excuse for your contempt or omission of the *Mat-ter*, which all agree in. Forsooth your families shall be *prayerless*, and you will make a jeast of *serious pray-er*, because some pray on a book, and some without, and some that are wisest, think that either way is law-ful. Will God be deceived by such silly reasonings as these?

2. But this shall not hide the na-kedness of your impiety. Will you also in the *Manner* of your obedience,

but go ſo far as all *Chriſtians* are *agreed* in? I will briefly then give you ſome particular inſtances.

1. The work of God muſt be *done with reverence*, in his *fear*: not like the common works of men, with a common careleſs frame of mind: God will be *ſanctified of all that draw near him*, *Lev* 10.3. He will be ſerved as God, and not as man: He will not be prayed to with a regardleſs mind, as thoſe do that can divide their tongues from their hearts, and ſay over ſome cuſtomary words while they think of ſomething elſe. Its a dreadful thing for duſt to ſpeak to God Almighty; and a dangerous thing to ſpeak to him as ſlightly and regardleſly, as if we were talking to one of our companions. It beſeemeth a believer to have more of the fear of God upon his heart, in his *ordinary converſe* in the world, than hypocrites and formaliſts have in their moſt *ſolemn prayers*. Knoweſt thou the difference between

between God and man? Put then such a difference between God and man in thy addresses, as his Majesty requireth. And see also that thy *family* compose themselves to a *reverent behaviour*, when they joyn with thee in the worshipping of God. What have you to say now against this *reverent manner* of behaviour? Is there any thing controvertible in this?

2. It is also requisite that you be *serious* and *sober* in all the service you perform to God. Do it not ludicrously, and with half a heart! Be as much more fervent and serious in seeking God and your salvation, than you are in seeking worldly things, as God and your Salvation is better than any thing in the world: Or if that be beyond your reach (though else there is reason for it) at least let the *greatest things* have the *greatest power* upon your hearts. You cannot

pray more fervently for Heaven than Heaven deserveth. O let but the excellency and greatness of your work appear in the *serious manner* of your performance. I hope you cannot say that this is any point of controversie, unless it be a controversie whether a man should be an hypocrite, or be *serious* in the Religion which he doth professe.

3. It is requisite that your service of God be performed *understandingly*, Psal. 47. 7. 1 Cor. 14. 15. God delighteth not in the blind devotion of men that know not what they do. Prayers not understood are indeed no prayers: For no mans desire goeth further than his knowledge. And he expresseth not his desires that knoweth not what he expresseth himself. Nor can he expect the concurrence of another mans desires, that speaketh what another understandeth not. The word that is not understood cannot

sink

ſink into the heart and ſanctifie it: or if it be not well and ſoundly underſtood, its eaſily ſtoln away by the tempter, *Matth.* 13. 19, 23. If underſtanding be neceſſary in our common converſations, much more in our holy addreſſes to the Almighty, *Prov.* 17. 27. *A man of underſtanding is of an excellent Spirit*: but God hath *no pleaſure in fools* or in their *Sacrifices*, Eccleſ. 5. 1, 4. nor is pleaſed with a Parrot-like lip-ſervice, which is not underſtood. He ſaith in deteſtation of the hypocrites, *This people draweth near unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me*, Mat. 15. 8, 9. I hope then when we call you to ſerve God in judgement and with underſtanding, we call you to nothing that a Chriſtian ſhould make queſtion of.

4. *God is a Spirit*, and they that ſerve him muſt ſerve *him in Spirit and in truth*, John 4. 24. *The Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him*, v. 23.

He calleth for the *heart*: he looketh for the inward desires of the soul: He converseth with minds that are *abstracted* from vanity, and are *seriously* taken up in attending him, and are intent upon the work they do: The *carkass* of a *Prayer* separated from the *Life* of it, stinketh before the holy God. As he will be *loved*, so will he be *served*, *with all the heart and soul and might*. And do we call you then to any thing that is doubtful, when we call you to the Spiritual worshipping of God?

5. Yet we maintain that the *body* hath its part in the service of God as well as the *soul*, and the *body* must express the inward reverence and devotion of the soul; though not in a way of *hypocritical ostentation*, yet in a way of *serious adoration*. The bowing of the knee, the uncovering of the head, and reverent deportment, and whatsoever nature, or common use, and holy institution hath made an expression of holy affections,

ons, and a decent and grave behaviour of our ſelves, ſhould be carefully obſerved in the preſence of the moſt High, and the holy things of God more reverently to be reſpected than the preſence of any mortal man. And the rather, becauſe that a grave, and reverent, and holy manner of deportment in Gods worſhip, reflecteth upon the heart, and helpeth us in our inward and ſpiritual devotion: and it helpeth the beholders, and awakeneth them to reverent thoughts of God, and holy things; which a regardleſs and common manner of deportment would extinguiſh. And its no *diſhonour* to *reverent behaviour*, that it is the uſe of *Hypocrites*, but rather an *honour* to it; For it is ſomething that is *good* that the *Hypocrite* uſeth for the cloak of his ſecret *emptineſs* or *evil*. If there were nothing *good* in *reverent behaviour* before God, it would not ſerve the Hypocrites turn. As it is a commendation

to *long-prayer*, that the Phariſees made it their pretence for the devouring of Widdows houſes: And thoſe that call them hypocrites that are *much* in *holy exerciſes* and *ſpeeches*, ſhould conſider, that if *holy exerciſes* and *ſpeeches* were not good, they were not fit for the hypocrites deſign; *evil* will not be a fit *cloak* for *evil*: that which the hypocrite thinks neceſſary to the *covering* of *his ſin*, we muſt think *more neceſſary* to the *cure* of our ſin and the ſaving of our ſouls; The way to avoid *hypocriſie* is not by running into *impiety* and *prophaneſs*: we muſt *do more* than the *hypocrite*, and not leſs, elſe he will riſe up in judgement againſt you, and condemn you, if he would do more to *ſeem good*, than you would do to *be good*, and to pleaſe your Maker: if a Phariſee will *pray longer* to colour his oppreſſion, than you will do to *attain ſalvation*. The miſchief of *hypocriſie* is, that the *ſoul*

of Religion is wanting, while the *corps* is preſent: And will you caſt away both *ſoul and body*: both *inſide* and *outſide*, in oppoſition to *hypocriſie*? If others do *ſeem* to love God when they do not, will you therefore not ſo much as *ſeem* to do it? So here about *reverence* in the ſervice of God: The *hypocrite* ſhould not *exceed* the *ſincere* in any thing that is truly good. This is the *manner* of Gods ſervice that I perſwade you to, and to no other: And is there any thing of controverſie in this? Prefer but the Spiritual part, and know but what that meaneth, [*I will have mercy and not ſacrifice*]: that ſo you may not *condemn the innocent*, and you ſhall never ſay that we will be more backward then you to *decency*, and *reverent* behaviour in Gods ſervice.

6. God will be ſerved in *Purity* and *Holineſs*, with cleanſed hearts and hands, and not with

ſuch as remain defiled with the guilt of any wilful ſin. He abhoreth the *ſacrifice* of the wicked and diſobedient. *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the Law, his prayers are abominable*, Prov. 28. 9. and 15. 8. & 21. 27. Iſa. 1. 13. Eccleſ. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. [*To what purpoſe is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me? ſaith the Lord,* (to oppreſſing wicked men) *Iſa.* 1. 11. *When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my Courts? Bring no more vain oblations: incenſe is an abomination to me: the new Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of Aſſemblies I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the ſolemn meeting,* &c. *ver.* 12, 13. *And when you ſpread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you; yea when you make many prayers I will not hear: your hands are full of blood; Waſh you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; ceaſe to do evil; learn to*

do

do well, ſeek judgement, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the fatherleſs, plead for the widdow; Come now and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord.]

To play the *glutton*, or *drunkard*, or filthy *fornicator* in the *day time*, and then to come to God at *night*, as if it were to make him amends by an hypocritical prayer; to *blaſpheme* Gods *name*, and oppoſe his *Kingdom* and *Government* in your ſelves and others, and to do your *own will*, and hate and ſcorn them that do *his will*, and ſtudy *his will* that they may do it, and then to *pray that Gods name may be hallowed, his Kingdom come, and his will be done*] is an *abuſing* God, and not a *ſerving* or *pleaſing* him. *Live* according to your *prayers*, and let your *lives* ſhew as well as your *words* what it is that you *deſire*. This is the ſervice of God that we call you to: And can you ſay that there is any thing controvertible in all this? Are there any men of any party among Chriſtians,

Christians, or sober Infidels that dare contradict it?

7. God will be served *entirely* and *universally*: in all his Commands; and with all your faculties; in works of *Piety*, *Justice*, and *Charity*, which must never be separated? You must not pretend your *Charity* against duties of *Piety*; for God is to be preferred in your estimation, love and service; and all that is done for *man*, must be done for *his sake*. You must not set up duties of *Piety* against duties of *Justice*, *Charity* and *Sobriety*: It is not *true Piety* that will not bring forth these. *God* must be *loved above all*, and our *neighbour as our selves*; and these two *sorts* of *love* are inseparable. Do *all the good* you can to *all* while you have *opportunity*; *especially to them of the houshold of faith*, Gal. 6. 10. What good you would *hear of* in the day of your accounts, that *do now*, speedily, diligently, and sincerely, according to your power. Say not, I may come to want my self, but [*cast thy bread*

upon

upon the waters, for thou ſhalt find it after many dayes ; give a portion to ſeven, and alſo to eight, for thou knoweſt not what evil ſhall be upon the earth, Eccleſ. 11. 1, 2.] and whether all may not quickly be taken from thee ; and then thou wilt wiſh thou hadſt done good with it while thou hadſt it, and lent it to the Lord, and *truſted* him with thy *remainder* who entruſted thee with his *bleſſings* ; and hadſt made thee *friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs, that when all fail they might receive thee into the everlaſting habitations.* Drop not now and then a ſcant and grudging alms, as if thou wert a *loſer* by it, and God muſt be beholden to thee ; but believe, that the greateſt gain is to thy ſelf, and look after ſuch bargains, and do good as readily, and gladly, and liberally, as one that verily expecteth a full reward in Heaven. This is part of the ſervice of God that we exhort you to, even to viſit, and relieve, and love Chriſt in his members

bers and brethren (*Mat.* 25.) and is there any thing of *doubt* or *controverſie in all this?*

8. Moreover, God will be ſerved with *Love, and willingneſs, and delight:* It is the moſt gainful, honourable, bleſſed, and pleaſant work in the world, which he hath appointed you, and not a *toileſome* task or ſlavery: and therefore it is not a Melancholy, pining, troubleſome courſe of life that we perſwade you to, under the name of Godlineſs; but it is to rejoyce in the Lord, and to live in the joyful expectations of Eternal Life, and in the ſence and aſſurance of the Love of God. If you could ſhew us any probability of a more pleaſant and joyful life on Earth, then that which ſerious Holineſs doth afford, I ſhould be glad with all my heart to hearken to you. I am ready to tell you what is the ground of *our comforts*, which faith revealeth: If you will come, and ſoberly debate the caſe, and ſhew us the matter

ter and ground of *your comforts*, which you have or hope for in any other way: if *yours* prove *greater*, and *better*, and *surer* than the *joyes of faith*, we will hearken to you, and be of your mind and side.

The matter of the *joyes* of a *Believer* is, that all his sins are pardoned; that God is reconciled to him in Christ; that he hath the promise of God, that all things, even the greatest sufferings, shall work together for his good; that he is alwayes in the love, and care, and hands of God; that he hath leave to draw near him by holy prayer, and open his heart to him in all his straits and wants; that he may solace himself in his Praises and Thanksgiving, and in other parts of holy worship; that he may read and hear his holy Word, the sure discovery of the will of God, and Revelation of the things unseen, and the Charter of his Inheritance; that he may exercise his soul in the serious believing

thoughts of the Love of God revealed in the wonderful work of our Redemption, and of the person, and office, and grace of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; and that he may love that God that hath so wonderfully loved him; that he hath the Spirit of God to quicken and actuate his soul, to supply his spiritual defects, and kill his sins, and help him to Believe, to Love, to Rejoyce, to Pray: that this Spirit is Gods Seal upon him, and the earnest of everlasting life; that Death shall not kill his hopes, nor end his happiness, but that his felicity and fullest joy beginneth, when that of worldlings hath an end, and their endless misery begins; that he is delivered from everlasting torment by the redemption of Christ, and the sanctification of the spirit; that Angels will attend his departing soul into the presence of his Father; that he shall be with his glorified Redeemer, and behold his Glory; that his body shall be raised

to

to everlasting life : that he shall be justified by Christ from all the accusations of the Devil, and all the slanders of the malicious world ; that he shall live with God in endless Glory, and see and enjoy the Glory of his Creator, and shall never more be troubled with enemies, with sin or sorrow, but among his holy ones, shall perfectly and most joyfully love and praise the Lord for ever.

These are the matter of a *Believers joy : These*, purchased by Christ, revealed in his Word, sealed by his Miracles, his Blood, his Sacraments, and his Spirit, are our comfort. *This* is the *Religion*, the *labour* that we invite you to : It is not to *despair*, nor to some dry unprofitable toil, nor to self-troubling, grieving, miserable melancholy, nor to costly Sacrifices, or idle Ceremonies, or irrational Service, such as the Heathens offered to their Idols ; it is not to cast away all mirth and comfort, and to turn unsociable, and morose, and sowre :

but

but it is to the greateſt joyes that the world alloweth, and nature is here capable of, and reaſon can diſcern and own : It is to begin a truly merry ſociable life : It is to fly from fear and ſorrow, in flying from ſin and Hell, and from the conſuming wrath of God : It is to the foretaſts of everlaſting joyes, and to the beginnings of eternal life. This is the labour, the Religion which we would have you follow with all your Might.

If *you* have *better* things to ſeek, and follow, and find, let us ſee them, that we may be as wiſe as you. If you have not, for your ſouls ſake, make not choiſe of vanity, which will deceive you in the day of your neceſſity.

But you muſt not think to make us believe that a great houſe, or a horſe, or a whore, or a feaſt, or a flatterer, or fine cloaths, or any childiſh toyes, or brutiſh filthineſs, are more comfortable things than Chriſt, and Everlaſting Life, or that it is

ſweeter

ſweeter and better to love a harlot, or lands, or money, than to love God, and Grace, and Glory: nor that any thing that will go no further than the Grave with you, is as good as that which will endure to Eternity; nor that any pleaſure which a dog or ſwine hath, is equal to the delights of the Angels of Heaven: If you would have us of *your mind*, you muſt not be of *this mind*, nor perſwade us to ſuch horrible things as theſe. But we profeſs to you and all the world, that we are not ſo in love with *ſorrows* or *ſowrneſs*, nor ſo fallen out with *joy* and *pleaſures*, as to *chooſe* a life of *miſerable ſadneſs*, or refuſe a life of *true delight*. If we could hear from any man, or find by the moſt diligent enquiry, that there is a more full, and ſweet, and rational, and ſatisfactory, and durable delight to be had in any other way then that of *ſerious faith and holineſs*, which Chriſt in Scripture hath revealed to us, we were like enough to hearken after it.

But

But can the distracted sensual world believe that it's sweeter and happier to ruffle it out in fleshly gallantry and sport, and to rage against the godly for a while, till the vengeance of God lay hold upon them, and give them their reward, then to live in the love of God, and wait in patience for the performance of Gods promise of everlasting joy? Oh what a thing is fleshly passion, and raging sensuality, and blind unbelief! The Lord have mercy upon deluded sinners; the Devils business is to turn the world into a *Bedlam*; and alas, how strangely hath he prevail'd! That so many men can take their *greatest misery* for their *happiness*, and the *only happiness* for an *intolerable life!* Yea, and be *so angry* with all that are not of *their mind*, and will not set as *much* by filth and foolery, and as *little* by God and Glory as they! Like the Noble man that was Lunatick, or mad by fits, and whenever he was mad, he would swear all

were

were mad that ſaid not as he ſaid, and would make all his ſervants be ſent to *Bedlam* that would not imitate him, and there they muſt lie as mad men till their Lord was recovered from *his madneſs*. So are Gods ſervants uſed and talkt of in the world, as if they were beſide themſelves, as long as the world is uncured of its madneſs. As the *Man is*, ſo is *his judgement*, and ſuch is his *reliſh*, and *deſire*, and *delight*: When I was a child, I had far more deſire to fill my pin-box, than now I have to fill my purſe, and accounted it a greater treaſure, and had much more delight and contentment in it. And alas, we may remember ſince we were ſtrangers to the reliſh of Heavenly things, that we found more pleaſure in that of which we are now aſhamed, then we did in the moſt high and excellent things. Let us therefore pitty and pray for thoſe that are diſtemped with the ſame diſeaſe.

I have been longer on this than I thought

thought to have been, becauſe men think that we call them from *all Mirth*, and *Joy*, and *Pleaſure*, to a *ſowre*, *heavy*, *melancholy* life, when we call them to *ſerious diligence* for their ſalvation. As if levity and folly were the only friends to *Pleaſure*, and it were only to be found in childiſh, worthleſs, tranſitory things. And as if the greateſt everlaſting Happineſs were no matter of true *Delight*, nor *Seriouſneſs* or *Diligence* a friend to *Joy*.

9. Moreover, as to the *manner*, God will be ſerved with *abſolute ſelf-reſignation*, without *Exceptions*, *Limitations* or *Reſerves*: Not with the leavings of the fleſh, nor with a *Proviſo* that you may not ſuffer by your Religion, or be poor, or *deſpiſed*, or *abuſed* by the world: But with *ſelf-denyal* you muſt lay down all the fleſhes intereſt at his feet; and you muſt take up your Croſs, and follow a ſuffering Chriſt to glory. You muſt ſerve him as thoſe that are wholly His,

and

and not your own, and *have* nothing but what is His, and therefore nothing to be *excepted*, *reſerved* or *ſaved from him*; but muſt be content that *you* and all your intereſt be in his hands, and *ſaved by him*, if ſaved at all. I know theſe terms ſeem *hard* to fleſh and blood (and ſhould Heaven be the Crown and reward to them, that have undergone no tryal for it?) But here is nothing but what is *paſt* all *controverſie*, and all Chriſtians do confeſs is the Word of Chriſt.

10. Laſtly, God will be ſerved *reſolvedly* and *conſtantly*: If you will *raign*, you muſt *conquer* and *endure to the end*. *Oppoſition* you muſt expect; and overcome it, if you would not be overcome. It is not good beginnings that will ſerve turn, unleſs you alſo *perſevere*, and fight out the good fight of faith, and finiſh your courſe, and patiently wait to the laſt breath, for the Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Righteous

Judge will give the Conquerours, when the unbeliéving world ſhall ſay of all their *Delight* and *Hope*, [Its *paſt* and gone, we ſhall never ſee or taſte it *more*] but muſt now taſte of that endleſs wrath of God which we were treaſuring up, when we ſhould have workt out our ſalvation.

Well Sirs, I have all this while been deſcribing to you, both as to the *Principles*, the *Matter* and the *Manner*, what that Religion and Service of God is, in which you muſt labour with all your might: that you may ſee that it is no factious or private opinions or practices that we call you to; and that your conſciences may no longer be deluded with the pretences of mens different opinions in Religion; and that the names of Prelatical, Presbyterian, Puritan, Papiſt, nor any other ſounding in your ears, may not ſo diſtract and doat you, as to make you forget the name of *Chriſtian* which you have all undertaken, nor what

the

the Chriſtian Religion is. You ſee now that it is nothing (no not a ſyllable or tittle) which all ſober Chriſtians are not agreed in, that we perſwade you to do as the work of your Religion: And therefore I tell you again here, before that God that ſhall be your Judge, and that Conſcience that ſhall be as a thouſand witneſſes, that if you will go on in ungodly worldly lives, and refuſe the *ſerious diligence* of Chriſtians in *this Religion* which *your ſelves profeſs*, it ſhall be ſo far from being any excuſe or eaſe to you, that there were *Hypocrites*, or *Hereticks*, or *Schiſmaticks*, or *different Opinions in Religion* in the world, that this very thing ſhall aggravate your ſin and condemnation, that all theſe Hypocrites, Schiſmaticks, or differing parties in the Church, did *agree* in the confeſſion of *all theſe things*, and yet for all that you would not practiſe them: no nor practiſe what *your ſelves confeſſed*: All theſe

Parties or Sects ſhall riſe up againſt the ſenſual and prophane ungodly ſinner, and ſay, [Though we were ignorant or doubtful of many other things, yet we were all agreed in theſe: we gave our concurrent teſtimony for them: we tempted no man to doubt of theſe, or to deny them.] If you will *err more* than an *Hypocrite* or a *Schiſmatick*, and be far *worſe* than thoſe that *are* ſuch, or *you account* ſuch, and think to excuſe it, becauſe *they erred* in leſſer things, it is as if the Devil ſhould excuſe his ſin by ſaying, [Lord, thy Saints did none of them love thee as they ſhould, and Hypocrites did but *ſeem* to love thee, and therefore I thought I might hate thee and ſet againſt thy wayes.

BUT (ſaith the ungodly ſenſualiſt) *I will never believe that God delighteth in long and earneſt prayers: or that he is moved by the paſſions or the words of men; and therefore I take this but for babling, which you call the ſerious diligence of Believers,*

lievers, in their ſerving God.]

To this impious objection, I return theſe ſeveral anſwers.

1. Suppoſe this *were true* as you imagine, whats this to you that ſerve God *no way at all* with any *ſerious diligence?* that live in ſenſuality, and wilful diſobedience to his Laws, and do more for your bodies than for your ſouls, and for temporal things than for eternal?

2. Who do you think is likeſt to underſtand Gods mind, and what is pleaſing to him? Himſelf or you? Is any thing more plainly commanded in Gods word than *praying* with *frequency*, *fervency*, and *importunity*, *Luk.* 18. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. 1 *Theſ.* 5. 17. *Jam.* 5. 16. And will you tell God that he hath but diſſembled with you, and told you that he is pleaſed with that which is not pleaſing to him?

3. And what is the reaſon of your unbelief? forſooth, becauſe God is not moved with humane words or paſſions! I grant he is not. But what

of that? Hath prayer no other uſe but to move God? It is enough, 1. That it moveth us, and fitteth us to receive his mercies. 2. And that God hath made it *neceſſary* to the *effect*, and a means or condition without which he will not give the bleſſing. Do you think (if you judge but by natural reaſon) that a perſon is as fit for a mercy that knoweth not the want or worth of it, and would not be thankful for it if he had it, as one that valueth it, and is diſpoſed to thankfulneſs and improvement? And do you not know that holy prayer is nothing but the actuating of holy deſires, and the exerciſe of all thoſe graces which are ſuited to the due eſtimation and improvement of the mercy. And is it not the way when we would draw the *boat* to the *bank*, to lay hold of the *bank* and pull, as if we would draw it to the *boat*? If God be not moved and drawn to us, it is enough that we are moved and

drawn

drawn to God? And with all that God may give his own bleſſings to whom and upon what terms he pleaſe, and that he hath aſſured us he will give them but to thoſe that value, deſire, and ſeek them, and that with faith, and fervency, and importunity.

And yet I may add, that God is ſo far above us, as that his incomprehenſible eſſence, and bleſſed nature is very little known to us; and therefore though we know and confeſs that he hath no humane paſſions or imperfections, yet if he aſſume to himſelf the title of ſuch a thing as love, deſire, joy or wrath, we muſt in reaſon believe, that though *theſe* are not in God as they are in man, with any imperfection; yet there is ſomething in God that cannot fitlier be repreſented to man, nor be underſtood by man, than by the images of ſuch expreſſions as God himſelf is pleaſed to uſe.

3. But I beſeech you hearken to *Nature* it ſelf. Doth it not teach

all rational creatures in neceſſity to *pray to God?* A ſtorm will teach the prophaneſt Sea-man to pray, and that with continuance and fervency. The Mariners could ſay to *Jonah* in their danger [*What meaneſt thou, O ſleeper? ariſe, call upon thy God; if ſo be that God will think upon us, that we periſh not.*] And *they* themſelves *cryed every man unto his God*, Jon. 1. 5, 6. When thou comeſt *to dye*, and ſeeſt there is no more delay, nor any more hope from the pleaſures of ſin, or from any of thy companions or old deceits, then tell me whether *nature* teach thee not to cry, and cry mightily for pardon, and mercy, and help to God? Then we ſhall hear thee crying [O mercy, mercy Lord, upon a miſerable ſinner] though now thou wilt not believe that prayer doth any good.

I'le ſay no more to thee of this: If Nature be not conquered, and Grace have not forſaken thee, thou wilt be taught at home to anſwer this

this objection. Sure thou canſt not eaſily ſo far conquer Reaſon, as to believe that there is no God. And if thou believe that there is a God, thou canſt not believe that he is not to be worſhipped, and that with the greateſt *ſeriouſneſs* and *diligence*! Nor that he is not the giver of all that thou doſt want! Or that the Governour of the world regardeth not the diſpoſitions and actions of his ſubjects, but will equally reward the good and bad, and give to all alike, and have no reſpect to mens preparations for his reward. What Heathen that believeth that there is a God, doth not believe that Prayer to him is a neceſſary part of his worſhip?

Obj. *But is not your ſtrict obſervation of the Lords Day a controverted thing?*

Anſw. In this alſo I will ſtrip thee of this excuſe. 1. Spend the Lords Day but according to the common principles of Chriſtianity and Reaſon, and it ſhall ſuffice: Spend it but as

one that loveth God better than any thing in the world, and that taketh more pleasure in his service than in sin and vanity: Spend it but as the *necessities* of thy *own soul*, and thy *families* require; as one thats glad of so honourable, gainful, and delightful an employment, as the publick and private worshipping of God, and the serious contemplation of the life to come: As one that knoweth the need and benefit of having stated times for the service of God; and what would come of all Religion, if the Time were left to each ones will? Spend it as men that put a just difference between the common business of this world, and the things that concern your endless state; and that have considered the proportion of one day in seven, in reference to this different consequence of the work: Spend it as men that have lost as much time as you have done, and have need to make the best of the little that is left; and

and that are behind hand ſo far in the matters of your ſalvation, and have need to work with all your might, and ſhould be gladder of the helps of ſuch a day, than of thouſands of gold and ſilver: Spend it as thoſe that believe that we owe God as much ſervice as the *Jews* did: Spend it as the ancient Chriſtians ſpent it, that were wont to ſtay together almoſt from morning till night in publick worſhip and communion: Spend it as the Kings Declaration requireth, which ſaith [*Our purpoſe and Reſolution is, and ſhall be, to take care that the Lords Day be applyed to holy exerciſes, without unneceſſary divertiſements.*

2. And if yet there be any doubt in this, I refer you to the judgement of the Church of *England*, expreſſed in the *Homily of the Time and Place of Prayer*. And for the *Time*, the *Name*, the *Antiquity*, the *Authority*, and the *Work* it ſelf, I deſire you but to receive what is there delivered, not by any factious perſons, but by the

Church.

Church. Do this, and we are agreed and satisfied. And I make it my request to the Reader, to peruse both *Parts* of that *Homily*, that he may know how far the Church of *England* is from the loose conceits of the enemies of Godliness: And if also you will read over the Homilies against the Peril of Idolatry, you will the fuller know the judgement of the Church about the manner of Gods worship. (Indeed the whole Book is such as the people should be acquainted with.)

I have

I Have done my part to open to you the Neceſſity of *SERIOUS DILIGENCE*, and to call up the ſluggiſh ſouls of ſinners to mind the work of their ſalvation, and to do it *SPEEDILY*, and with all their *MIGHT*. I muſt now leave the ſucceſs to God and you. What uſe you will make of it, and what you will be and do for the time to come, is a matter that more concerneth your ſelves than me. If long ſpeaking, or multitude of words, were the way to prevail with you, I ſhould willingly ſpeak here while my ſtrength would endure, and lengthen out my exhortations yet ſeven-fold. But thats not the way: A little wearieth you: You love long feaſts, and long viſits, and playes, and ſports, much better than long Sermons, or Books, or Prayers. But it is no ſmall grief to us, to leave you in a cauſe of ſuch importance, without ſome

ſome conſiderable hopes of your deliverance.

Sirs, the matter is now laid before you, and much in your own hands; it will not be ſo long! What will you now do? Have I *convinced* you now, that God and your ſalvation are to be ſought with all your might? If I have not, it is not for want of evidence in what is ſaid, but for want of willingneſs in your ſelves to know the truth: I have proved to you, that it is a matter *out of controverſie*, unleſs your luſts, and paſſions, and carnal intereſt will *make a controverſie* of it. I beſeech you tell me, if you be of any Religion at all, why are you not *ſtrict*, and *ſerious*, and *diligent*, and *mortified*, and *heavenly in that Religion* which you are of? Sure you will not ſo far ſhame your own *Religion*, whatever it be, as to ſay that your Religion is not for mortification, holineſs, heavenlineſs, ſelf-denyal, or that your Religion alloweth you to be ambitious, covetous, glut-

gluttonous, drunken, to curſe, and ſwear, and whore, and rail, and oppreſs the innocent: It is not *Religion*, but *Diabolical ſerpentine malignity* that is for any of this.

Its wonderful to think, that learned men, and Gentlemen, and men that pretend to reaſon and ingenuity, can quietly betray their ſouls to the Devil upon ſuch ſilly grounds, and do the evil that they have no more to ſay for, and neglect that duty that they have no more to ſay againſt, when they know they muſt do it *NOW* or *NEVER!* That while they *confeſs* that there is a God, and a life to come, a Heaven and a Hell, and that this life is purpoſely given us for preparation for Eternity, while they *confeſs* that God is moſt wiſe, and holy, and good, and juſt, and that ſin is the greateſt evil, and that the word of God is true, they can yet make ſhift to quiet themſelves in an unholy, ſenſual, careleſs life: And that while

while they honour the Apoſtles and Martyrs, and Saints that are dead and gone, they hate their ſucceſſors and imitators, and the lives that they lived, and are inclined to make more Martyrs by their malicious cruelty.

Alas, all this comes from the want of a ſound belief of the things which they never ſaw; and the diſtance of thoſe things, and the power of paſſion, and ſenſual objects and inclinations, that hurry them away after preſent vanities, and conquer reaſon, and rob them of their humanity; and by the noiſe of the company of ſenſual ſinners, that harden and deaffen one another, and by the juſt judgement of God, forſaking thoſe that would not know him, and leaving them to the blindneſs and hardneſs of their hearts. But is there *no remedy*! O thou the fountain of mercy and relief, vouchſafe theſe miſerable ſinners a remedy! O thou the Saviour of loſt mankind, have

have mercy upon theſe ſinners in the depth of their ſecurity, preſumption and miſery! O thou the Illuminater and Sanctifier of ſouls, apply the remedy ſo dearly purchaſed! *We* are conſtrained oft to fear leſt it be much long of *us*, that ſhould more *ſeriouſly* preach the awakening truths of God unto mens hearts. And verily our conſciences cannot but accuſe us, that when we are moſt *lively* and ſerious, alas, we ſeem but almoſt to trifle, conſidering on what a meſſage we come, and of what tranſcendent things we ſpeak. But Satan hath got his advantage upon *our hearts* that ſhould be inſtrumental to kindle *theirs*, as well as *on theirs* that ſhould receive the truth. O that we could thirſt more after their ſalvation! O that we could pray harder for it; and entreat them more earneſtly; as thoſe that were loth to take a denyal from God or man; I muſt confeſs to you all with ſhame and ſorrow, that I am even

amazed

amazed to think of the hardneſs of my own heart, that melteth no more in compaſſion to the miſerable, and is no more earneſt and importunate with ſinners, when I am upon ſuch a *ſubject as this*; and am telling them that it muſt be NOW or NEVER; and when the meſſengers of *Death within*, and the *fame* of *mens diſpleaſure* from *without*, doth tell me how likely it is that *my Time* ſhall be but *ſhort*, and that if I will ſay any thing that may reach the hearts of ſinners, for ought I know, it muſt be NOW or NEVER. O what an obſtinate, what a lamentable diſeaſe is this inſenſibility and hardneſs of heart! If I were ſure this were the laſt Sermon that ever I ſhould preach, I find now my heart would ſhew its ſluggiſhneſs, and rob poor ſouls of the *ſerious fervour* which is ſuitable to the ſubject and their caſe, and needful to the deſired ſucceſs.

But yet, poor ſleepy ſinners, *hear us*: Though we ſpeak not to you as

as men would do that had *ſeen Heaven* and *Hell*; and were themſelves in a perfectly awakened frame, yet *hear us* while we ſpeak to you the *words of Truth* with ſome *ſeriouſneſs* and compaſſionate deſire of your Salvation. O look up to your God! Look out unto eternity: Look inwardly upon your ſouls: Look wiſely upon your ſhort and haſty Time: and then bethink you how the little remnant of your Time ſhould be employed; and what it is that *moſt* concerneth you to diſpatch and ſecure before you dye. *Now* you have *Sermons*, and *Books*, and *Warnings*: It will not be ſo *long*: Preachers muſt have done: *God* threatneth them, and *death* threatneth them, and men threaten them, and its *you*, its *you* that are moſt ſeverely threatned, and that are called on by Gods warnings, [*If any man have an ear to hear, let him hear.*] *Now* you have abundance of private helps, you have abundance of underſtanding

derſtanding gracious companions; you have the Lords dayes to ſpend in holy exerciſes for the edification and ſolace of your ſouls; you have choice of ſound and ſerious Books: and bleſſed be God, you have the Protection of a Chriſtian and a Proteſtant King and Magiſtracy: O what unvaluable mercies are all theſe! O know your time, and uſe theſe with induſtry, and improve this harveſt for your ſouls! For it will not be thus *alwayes*: It muſt be NOW or NEVER.

You have *yet* time and leave to *Pray* and cry to God in hope: Yet if you have hearts and tongues, he hath a hearing ear; The Spirit of grace is ready to aſſiſt you: It will not be thus *alwayes*: The time is coming when the loudeſt cries will do no good: O pray, pray, pray poor needy miſerable ſinners; for it muſt be NOW or NEVER.

You have *yet* health and ſtrength, and bodies fit to ſerve your ſouls:

ſouls: It will not be ſo *alwayes*: Languiſhing and pains and death are coming. O uſe your health and ſtrength for God: For it muſt be NOW or NEVER.

Yet there are ſome ſtirrings of *conviction* in your *Conſciences*: You find that all is not well with you: and you have ſome thoughts or purpoſes to repent and be new creatures: There is ſome hope in this, that yet God hath not quite forſaken you. O trifle not and ſtifle not the convictions of your conſciences, but hearken to the witneſs of God within you: It muſt be NOW or NEVER.

Would you not be loth to be left to the deſpairing caſe of many poor diſtreſſed ſouls, that cry out, *O it is now too late! I fear my day of grace is paſt; God will not hear me now if I ſhould call upon him: he hath forſaken me, and given me over to my ſelf. It is too late to repent, too late to pray, too late to think of a new life; all is too late.*

This

This caſe is ſad: But yet many of theſe are in a ſafer and better caſe than they imagine, and are but *frightned* by the Tempter, and it is *not too late*, while they cry out, *It is too late*; But if you are left to cry in *Hell* [*It is too late*] alas, how *long* and how *doleful* a cry and lamentation will it be!

O conſider poor ſinner, that God knoweth the *Time* and *Seaſon* of thy *mercies*: He giveth thee *Spring* and *Harveſt* in their *Seaſon*: and all his mercies in their *Seaſon*, and wilt thou not know *thy Time* and *Seaſon*, for *love* and *duty* and *thanks* to him?

Conſider that God who hath commanded thee thy work, hath alſo appointed thee thy time: And this is his appointed time. To day therefore hearken to his voice, and ſee that thou harden not thy heart: He that bids thee *Repent and work out thy Salvation with fear and trembling*, doth alſo bid thee do it *Now*: *Obey* him in the *time*, if thou wilt be *indeed obedient*;

obedient; He beſt underſtandeth the fitteſt time. One would think to men that have loſt ſo much already, and loitered ſo long, and are ſo lamentably behind hand, and ſtand ſo near the barr of God, and their everlaſting ſtate, there ſhould be no need to ſay any more, to perſwade them to be up and doing. I ſhall add but this: *You are never like to have a better time.* Take this or the work will grow more *difficult*, more *doubtful*, if through the juſt judgement of God, it become not *deſperate*. If all this will not ſerve, but ſtill you will loiter till time be gone, what can your poor friends do but lament your miſery! The Lord knows, if we knew what words, what pains, what coſt would tend to your awakening, and converſion and ſalvation, we ſhould be glad to ſubmit to it: and we hope we ſhould not think our labours, or liberties or our lives too dear to promote ſo bleſſed and ſo neceſſary a work. But if when all is done that we can do,

do, you will leave us nothing but our tears and moans for ſelf-deſtroyers, the ſin is yours, and the ſuffering ſhall be yours: If I can do no more, I ſhall leave this upon record, that *we took our Time* to tell you home, that SERIOUS DILIGENCE is neceſſary to your Salvation, and that *God* is the *Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*, Heb. 11. 6. and that *this* was your *day*, your *only day*: It muſt be NOW or NEVER.

FINIS.